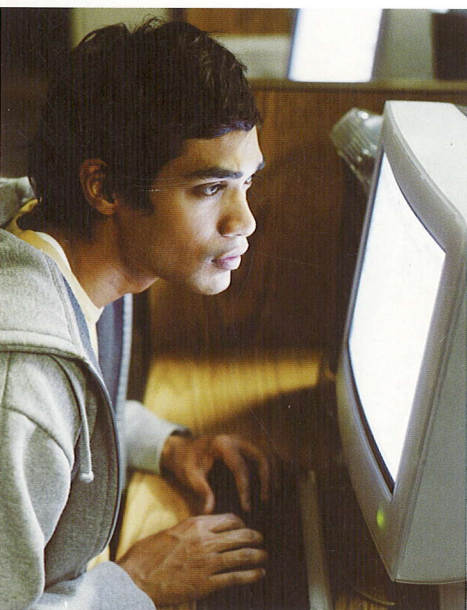




Transition Induction & Progression Strategies



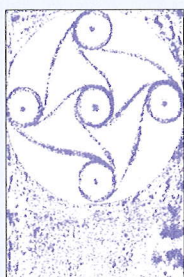
Transition, Induction and Progression Strategies

(January 2003 – December 2004)

Transition, Induction & Progression Strategies (TIPS)
Final Project Report
August 2005

Transition, Induction & Progression Strategies (TIPS)
Manchester Metropolitan University

Karen Duggan & Gill Rice



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Contents

1: Abstract

2: Introduction

3: Aims and Methods

3.1: Aims

3.1a: Methods

3.2: ESF Bid Objectives

3.2a: Theoretical Framework

3.2b: Stakeholders

3.2c: Data Collection

4: TIPS Procedures

4.1: TIPS Impartial Pre-entry Events 2003

4.2: Induction Phase at MMU 2003

4.3: University-wide On-Course Support at MMU for 2003 Entrants

4.3a: TIPS Support at an Individual Level

4.3b: TIPS Support at Course Level

4.3c: TIPS Support at Faculty Level

4.3d: TIPS Supporting The Supporters

4.4: TIPS Pre-entry Guidance in 2004

4.5: Embedding and Sustainability

4.5a: Induction Phase at MMU 2004

4.6: Analysis and Key Findings

4.6a: Obstacles to Student Well-being: Contributing Factors

4.6b: Initial Findings and Recommendations

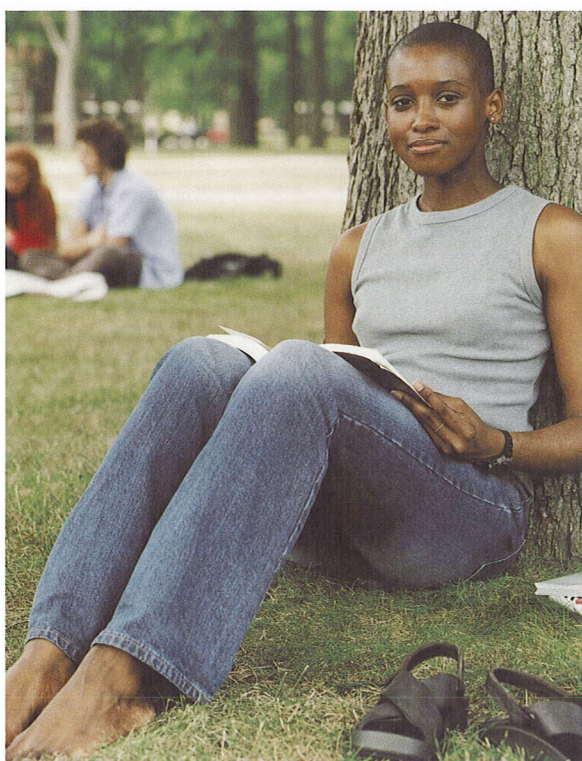
4.6c: Further Findings and Recommendations

5: Discussion

6: Conclusion

7: References

8: Appendices



1: Abstract

Labour's governmental policy on Widening Participation has led to a greater diversity of students entering higher education. Whilst some educationalists have argued that this has led to falling academic standards and a '*dumbing down*' of academic rigour, others are increasingly recognising the need for '*change*' to meet the demand of students with shifting '*typical*' student profiles.

TIPS (Transition, Induction and Progression Strategies) operated during 2003/4 and was a European Social Fund (ESF) Project hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), which, drawing on Community Psychology and '*Participatory Action Research*' (Orford, 1992), has explored the value of piloting innovative methods to support large numbers of diverse students from Excellence Challenge Institutions and Access Course pathways in Greater Manchester and South Cheshire.

The objective of this research was to capture and elucidate the processes which contribute to empowerment and well-being of emerging Learning and Teaching communities, whilst providing a 'robust' survival kit for learners and practitioners in order to contribute to the direct avoidance of 'academic haemorrhage' of learners whilst understanding progression into and through higher education.

Targeting new students and responding to their structural and cultural needs as new students, TIPS has responded to their '*situated positions*' within wider social contexts. This pedagogy encourages people to synergise life experiences with their personal goal framework by advising them to both draw upon and value social and personal networks as part of the process which contributes to them achieving their educational goals.

The research put forward by TIPS, is just one example of how an institution, supported by European Funding and documentary guidelines, has responded to current governmental policy within sub-regions in the North West Region of England.

TIPS has guided students labelled 'new' and 'at risk' towards developing a 'conscientization' (Freire, 1972) of their own, which values the adoption of self help strategies facilitated through notions of active dialogues. TIPS, as a service, has also drawn upon notions of 'accompaniment' (Edge, Kagan & Stewart, 2003) and good guidance (Connexions). The TIPS team have demonstrated a commitment to a transparent practice which explores pathways to healthy learning frameworks for *practitioners* as well as *students* in the crusade for a more global sense of well-being, simultaneously for both the professionals of today and tomorrow.

In doing this, the TIPS research retention project, offers evidence-based practice from a multi-layered, transparent and democratic perspective which, as a service, has strived to produce a demand-led Student Support strategy which can be deemed of an auditable quality and an *exemplar of good practice*.

The TIPS intervention model is informed by the unpacking of student communications which outlines the costs and benefits which are prevalent to students when engaging with relational support networks in higher education, whilst at the same time, attempting to explain wider educational and societal concerns.

TIPS, as a responsive service, recognises and draws upon models that value the concept of *collaboration* as key when critically exploring effective economic and consultative solutions to address Widening Participation. As a result, TIPS claims to be 'revolutionary' through exercising a critical mapping of the utility of such a generic service, as a fundamental ingredient, which can be defined as a demonstration of a clear commitment to reflective Learning And Teaching and Widening Participation good practice that is guided by Community Psychology underpinnings as part of its intrinsic motivational framework.

Such a critical search for the alignment between theory and practice via the documentation of factors which affect diverse student success, draws upon the internal dilemmas encountered when tracking 'at risk students' and the utility of the tools available to do so, from the position of the practitioner as well as the student.

The underpinnings of such a proactive approach have been to collectively drive *change* agents towards culture shifts in organisational as well as societal processes by supporting multiple communities into and through processes pertinent to educational awareness, achievement and progression drawing on and being guided by European, Institutional, Widening Participation and Learning and Teaching agendas.

Such 'think tank' methodologies are striving to achieve a synergy between cultural and economic advantage by holding up the mirror to student support and student/staff relationships, with the intention that such findings will bear fruit in that they *may* contribute a weighting towards a genuine understanding of how best to Widen Participation as well as retain students through exploration of notions of citizenship.

In doing this, TIPS explores as well as questions to what extent there is a need for '*multi-layered change*' using proactive and responsive approaches when supporting diverse student communities within the arenas of student retention, achievement and progression.



2: Introduction

“...We must widen participation, not simply increase it. Widening participation means increasing access to learning and providing opportunities for success and progression to a much wider cross-section of the population than now.”

Kennedy (1997a)

It can be argued that governmental policy is driving institutional agendas in the area of increasing participation in higher education, widening diversity and improving retention (DfEE, 2000). National policy on widening participation has meant that students once considered as a 'minority' within higher education, such as 'non-traditional' and 'Access' students, are increasingly becoming the norm. (Macdonald and Stratta, 2001:250). This has led some to argue that increased participation has caused falling academic standards in higher education. Furthermore, increased participation has been linked to increases in student withdrawal (Thomas, 2002).

As Thomas notes, '*...there is a tendency to attribute lower levels of completion to greater student diversity and a lack of 'academic preparedness' of these new student groups*' (2002:426).

Whilst on the one hand, there are those who locate blame with the individual student, adopting a positivistic and medical model approach, critical theorists argue that there presents an alternative educational perspective to such a blame culture, which values the benefits of driving notions of *collective responsibility* to achieve shifts in institutional change which, in turn, considers diversity as much as retention.

As Woodrow notes, '*While most institutions recognise that students from under-represented groups need to change to survive the HE environment, fewer are prepared to accept that institutions also need to change. Change to meet the learning needs of access entrants is still resisted on the grounds of defending academic standards*' (2002).

Macdonald and Stratta state that greater student diversity, '*...is increasingly recognised as having implications for learning and teaching policies (ILT, 1999) and for changes in the academic culture*' (2001:250).

Thomas, drawing on the work of Bourdieu, argues that, '*institutional habitus*' plays a part in making students feel whether or not they fit in. If '*institutional habitus*' are inclusive and accepting of difference, celebrating and prizing diversity, then this in turn will promote retention (2002:431).

Thomas highlights, '*staff attitudes and their relationships with students as an important means by which social and academic distance can be minimised, enabling students to feel valued and sufficiently confident to seek guidance when they require it*' (2002:439).

Whilst Thomas focuses on the role of academic staff, those who work within the student support services, may have a pluralistic role and it can be argued that they have an important responsibility to advise and support students and so promote a feeling of 'fitting in' as well as contributing to the enhancement of emotional and psychological well-being. Yet, the nature of student support services has often meant that students access support when they are experiencing severe problems and such services are recognised as being *reactive* rather than *pro-active* as a result.

It is increasingly being recognised that, '*As the student population diversifies, it is clear that the work of Student Services is becoming more complex, requiring a greater variety of responses*' (Universities UK, 2002:7).

Therefore there is a need for support services within higher education to develop timely intervention services as well as capture situated experiences of the ever changing current student profiles within education systems which recognises, as well as vocalises an 'up to the minute' or a 'real-time' mapping of the journey through the '*student lifecycle*' in the 21st century (HEFCE, circular 01/36).





TIPS as an Action Research Project (Lewin, 1951) charges itself with taking a closer look at such models of good practice that map 'the student experience' from the pre-entry phase; before entering higher education, right through to their transition into and through the first year at university whilst considering the structural positions of such groups. These interventionist responses recognise the diversity of the student population and provide innovative approaches which enhance as well as evaluate the development of an effective and inclusive student support service for students transitioning into and through higher education.

Whilst doing this, staff in light of Thomas' assessment, need to adopt a reflexive approach, in order to both assess the support on offer and to examine their own practice in terms of promoting inclusion.

TIPS In Context

Through a project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) at Manchester Metropolitan University, the ways in which students previously identified as collectively coming from 'non-traditional' backgrounds can be supported in their transition into higher education have been researched, recorded and developed.

TIPS is a project which has focussed on strategies to facilitate retention, progression and student wellbeing in Greater Manchester and South Cheshire for those level 3/Year Zero/Year One HE students, previously defined as at particular risk of 'drop-out' or showing a 'lack' of success.

TIPS developed an approach to student support that offered impartial pre-entry guidance to potential local higher education applicants in a number of formats and arenas. Further, new students who decided to enrol at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) have been supported through their *first year* of studies in a variety of ways.

What is central to this work is that student support services at MMU are made up of small teams and can often find themselves in a *reactive* state as a result of supporting a growing pool of 33,000 students. Therefore, TIPS, can be seen to add value to the support services by supporting the practitioners themselves, where necessary, in order to move student support teams towards a more *proactive* state where they can better support wider groups of the student population through working together as a *unitary collective*.

The project was originally staffed by a team of **three** who were appointed in **May 2003**. The TIPS' Personal Advisors, supported and tracked students over the course of one academic in Greater Manchester and selected areas of South Cheshire.

The nature of the project meant that support strategies could be adopted and analysed for their effectiveness and suitability as well as identification of the factors which have contributed towards the TIPS critical analysis of the available student tracking tools used to measure the impact of the service.

Drawing upon the ESF bid framework, a fundamental principle has been to adopt a Connexions methodology in supporting students. Although restricted to those young people from 13-19 years of age, the 'Connexions' model emphasises the need for advice and guidance which is both accessible when required with the ability to provide a critical link to other support services. Further, support is tailored in order to assist individuals to overcome barriers to success and facilitate empowerment in terms of progression and achievement (www.connexions.gov.uk).

From a reflexive perspective, it is also important to note, that Connexions in very recent years, has become a service which has bridged the gap between schools and their learners using relational advisers who provide information, advice and guidance on progression and achievement pathways through educational, employment and career sectors for young people, particularly for those learners from backgrounds with no experience of higher education or who are members of communities with a track record of low levels of participation in higher education.

3: Aims and Methods

3.1: Aims

The central aim of this research has been to elucidate the impact and interplay of organisational and cultural practices operating within a complex multileveled Widening Participation educational change project. A clear aim of this project was to empower vulnerable people who have little access to social power with knowledge about how to progress into and through university by drawing upon and utilising an innovative service which has adopted a diverse and inclusive relational approach to targeted student support.

A key supplementary aim defined at the outset, was to maintain a transparent, democratic and responsive practitioner approach towards providing a generic student support service for learners which was guided by a prescribed ESF bid framework.

3.1a: Methods

The TIPS project, through exploring and evaluating 'Action Research' methodologies, sought to capture the utility of 'Pre-entry guidance' and the impact of additional 'On-course support' as well as trying to respond to the professional perspectives of the community of academic/non-academic staff who support learners within identified contexts.

Action Research can be described as an approach which focuses on working with people to identify problems in practice, implement change and evaluate solutions (Reason and Rowan, 1981).

It can be seen as a, '*...way of generating knowledge about a social system while, at the same time, attempting to change it*' (Hart and Bond, 1995:13)

3.2: ESF Bid Objectives

'The key question to be tested is whether an innovative approach to pre-entry support, followed by support during the first year of higher education study, targeted on specific student groups at particular risk of 'drop-out' or lack of success, will improve the retention and success rates of those groups. Intending degree students drawn from Greater Manchester, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe **Excellence Challenge/Excellence in Cities cohorts** and MMU's Foundation Year applicants will receive pre-entry guidance and support to:

- Boost the skills they require for a successful higher education experience
- Maximise 'best fit' between student interests/experience and degree course
- Raise confidence levels
- Orient them to the nature and demands of higher education.

Target groups who opt to join MMU will be tracked through their first two terms at university. This will be with particular reference as to whether likely barriers to success need attention, and where necessary, students will receive targeted continuing guidance and support. Through focussing on particular groups of students, TIPS will provide an indicator of particular issues affecting student success.

This will enable a strategic approach to be developed for increasing retention and improving achievement amongst target groups. Maintaining the advisor student relationship in the first year will enable potential barriers to be identified and strategies for enabling students to overcome such barriers to be developed. Such strategies will be disseminated to enable more effective referral procedures between academic departments and pastoral support services. It is also intended that outcomes will contribute to a review of arrangements for pre-entry guidance being made more generally available. The project will also inform professional training delivered at the University, e.g. training of Connexions personal advisors. The existence of a mix of students receiving:

- (a) both Pre-entry and On-course support
- (b) only On-course support

will provide an interesting dimension to the monitoring and evaluation.

Key to this project is to focus on an understanding of the demand and context of higher education and in particular, within MMU. Current student pastoral services are highly stretched and inevitably reactive and it is intended that the TIPS initiative will enhance and underpin the work of the services and of programme tutors and advisors will contribute to the orientation and confidence building of target groups.' (ESF bid by Rob Halsall, Head of Widening Participation & Sheila Aynsley-Smith, Head of Student Services, MMU, 2003).



3.2a: A Theoretical Framework

Community Psychology is about the interdependence of individuals and their settings and systems at many levels including the 'highest' or macro-level. The macro-level is concerned with social stratification, particularly stratification by socio-economic status but also by factors of gender, race, age and disability (House & Mortimer, 1990). Whatever level we are working at we should be alert to the influence of factors operating at higher and lower levels (Garbarino, 1982).

'Once the focus is upon understanding and changing an organisation then Community Psychology is being practised' (Orford, 1992),

and this contributes to the first steps in, *'Shoring up the moral foundations of our society'* (Etzioni, 1995:248).

It is a division that, *'...Focuses on community research and action and adopts the central idea that social systems and environmental influences are important foci for enhancing well being'* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

It represents a theoretical framework which centres its focus on collective action as the vehicle to drive social change. Any change at this level may be seen as a valid contribution towards the revolution of Widening Participation in higher education. Partly, because Community Psychology is also committed to empiricism and draws upon scientist-practitioner models (Barlow, Hayes and Nelson, 1984).

3.2b: Stakeholders

Identification of target groups

Contact was initially made with **Excellence Challenge Co-ordinators** within the geographical area of the project and a contact list of Excellence Challenge representatives in feeder colleges was obtained from them.

As the project was widened to include **Access to Higher Education (HE)** students, contact was also initiated with local Access to HE Co-ordinators.

Identification of students from target groups initially proved difficult due to gaining access to applicant information, 'real time' from the MMU 'Citrix Student Applicant Database'. This data is drawn from an electronic record database of any higher education applicant who identifies MMU as 1 of their 6 UCAS choices. Most post-16 institutions were reluctant to provide student data and the sharing of student personal information, due to concerns arising around compliance with the Data Protection Act irrespective of the valuable purpose and benefits identified as deriving from such work. Nevertheless, problems of accessing applicant details from the MMU applicants' database were recognised as a temporary obstacle rather than a concrete barrier to progress as it was more important to follow or focus time on tracking those students, with UCAS applicant status, that accessed the service.

A key barrier to progress which penetrated the pace of change and needs important consideration, was the restriction placed upon us by time frameworks, which constantly influenced progress; this was addressed through responsive modification, providing a transformative framework for action and change.

Target groups offered pre-entry support were:

- those 2003 entry UCAS applicants who came from local Excellence Challenge (EC) institutions (**Appendix A**)
- those students studying in 2003/04 in targeted post-16 EC institutions in preparation for 2004 HE entry (**Appendix A**)
- those who applied to the 2003/04 University Foundation Year bridging scheme
- 2003/04 applicants who came from any local Access to HE course (**Appendix A**)

On-course support was initially offered to those students who applied to the University Foundation Year bridging scheme (Year Zero) or any first year undergraduate programme (Year One) at MMU but this extended to all *new* students at MMU, even if they were embarking on postgraduate study in order to adhere to the notion of inclusive practice.

TIPS, as a generic and responsive student support service, has driven innovative approaches for assisting students during the transition from post-16 education through to the first year of their academic studies on undergraduate/postgraduate programmes. This has been achieved through collaboration with both internal and external partners, often drawing on the expertise of others to develop support and guidance networks of good practice. Further to this, and perhaps more importantly, the aim has been to position the student at the *centre* of the process and respond to needs and concerns which they have highlighted. Through taking this approach, the team have positioned themselves as *the learners* rather than *the experts* and have used insights gleaned from students to develop both written and web-based materials as well as striving to offer timely, appropriate 'Pre-entry and On-course' advice and guidance. Over the academic year, this collaborative approach has informed practice and led the team to analyse the success of various strategies. This has been facilitated by not having to 'fit in' to an existing institutional framework, instead, the TIPS team were able to develop and refine a model taking into account a diverse student population and the local and multiple communities in which MMU, as an institution, is embedded.

3.2c: Data Collection

It was decided that due to the project being so complex and multi-layered, a multi-methodological approach to data collection would be adopted in order to generate a rich and transparent picture of evaluation focussing on to what extent TIPS support had been effective through capturing differing narratives from both student and practitioner perspectives.

Data was collected in many formats:

- Case notes compiled on students who accessed the TIPS one-to-one support service
- Practitioner field diaries/Project Manager progress reports
- Post-16 Practitioner and Student Ambassador feedback evaluation forms
- TIPS student workshop feedback evaluation forms
- Mixed design questionnaires – overall TIPS service student evaluation forms
- TIPS focus groups



4: TIPS Procedures

4.1: TIPS Impartial Pre-entry Events 2003

As the team were appointed late (5 months into the project timeline), it was untimely to access students in the post-16 institutions due to a collision with the exam period; therefore emergency planning took place, avoiding an early crisis which had the potential to undermine the whole project if such students were not supported through their early transitional experiences into higher education. From this, it was proposed that TIPS would offer impartial pre-entry guidance via two events in September 2003 prior to the Induction period which fell in late September 2003.

1800 invitations to the impartial pre-entry events were sent out to all target applicants who had identified MMU as one of their six UCAS choices. These initially were from local Excellence Challenge feeder institutions to MMU already identified as housing high numbers of 'non-traditional' students.

Only selected Local Education Authorities (LEA's) were identified that were considered 'local' to MMU, Manchester and MMU, Cheshire. Foundation Year applicants were also identified as a target group in the ESF bid as this bridging scheme has previously been profiled as recruiting high numbers of students 'at risk' of dropout. As the Foundation Year has dedicated support staff who already offer pre-entry guidance to applicants, it was felt by the Foundation Year team, that TIPS should focus on offering pre-entry guidance in 2003 to all the students who came through Clearing procedures only but On-course support in 2003 was to be offered to the entire Foundation Year cohort.

Value was 'added' at this stage by including students from Access courses in the invitation loop to the pre-entry events as it was identified that mature students could benefit from pre-entry guidance but had been overlooked in the ESF bid. This doubled the amount of target colleges from 17 to 35 (**Appendix A**). Invites went out in the third week in August 2003 towards the end of the 'Clearing Period', (when the last few HE places are allocated by

universities and other HE institutions), close to the start of the new academic year in order to include late applicants. As there was only a small window for applicants to respond, pre-paid envelopes, maps and booking forms were included.

As induction week began on 22nd September 2003, TIPS decided to run two pre-entry guidance events for the HE applicants from the target institutions as a primary focus; Manchester on the 8th September 2003 and MMU Cheshire on the 15th September 2003. An overview of the 13 workshops on offer at each event was sent to applicants with an invitation to attend (**Appendix B**). Applicants were asked to select their top five workshops in advance in order to identify what their individual key areas of concern were from their own perspective at the pre-entry stage of their higher education experience (**Appendix C**).

273 applicants booked to attend the two pre-entry events (**Appendix G**). Staff employed in support service roles delivered the workshops and were offered the opportunity to contribute an overview of their session to a Pre-entry Resource Pack. This meant that applicants received information about the workshops which they hadn't selected but may have been curious about, as well as the ones chosen as their personally selected top five choices. All those who booked, whether they attended or not, were sent Pre-entry Resource Packs thus splitting levels of guidance into two types of support:

- **Level 1 Pre-entry** – Receipt of pre-entry resource materials only
- **Level 2 Pre-entry** – Attendance at the pre-entry event plus receipt of materials

At the start of each event, applicants were made aware of a question and answer box in which they could post questions and this formed the basis of the end of day question and answer forum. The panel who responded to these questions were a selection of facilitators that the students had interacted with throughout each event. Practitioner, as well as student feedback was collected and collated to produce an analysis of the utility of the events from differing perspectives (**Appendix F**).



TIPS Pre-entry Event Analysis (Manchester, 2003)

223 students indicated that they would be attending the event in Manchester on the 8th September 2003 (**Appendix G**), of these 149 students actually attended (Level 2 Pre-entry). The 74 students who booked for the event but did not attend were sent a copy of the Pre-entry Resource Pack (Level 1 Pre-entry). Because of the high number of students indicating that they wanted to attend the event in Manchester, there was a concern that we would not be able to accommodate them all on the day; therefore the decision was taken to close the Manchester event and offer students the alternative of attending the MMU, Cheshire event. A coach was organised to take students from All Saints, Manchester to MMU Cheshire for those wanting to take up this option. Ten students took up this offer. All students attending the pre-entry events were asked to complete a 'Pre-entry day feedback form' at the end of the event (**Appendix E**). A total of 62 pre-entry day feedback forms were completed at the Manchester event, giving a response rate of 41.6%. This number provided an indicator of how students viewed the event and its usefulness to them.

In response to 'Which aspects of the day did you find most useful?', 60 students answered this question, identifying a range of different aspects about the event; these ranged from specific pre-entry workshops to general orientation. 47 students identified workshops as the most useful aspect of the day, some identifying more than one workshop in response to this question.

Workshop	Most Useful Students Workshops
Learning styles	30%
Library Information	26%
Finance	17%
Careers	11%
Budgeting	8.5%
Student Advice Centre	8.5%
Student Union	6%
Study Skills	6%
Voluntary work	4%
Mature students	2%
Sports	2%
Question Forum	2%

13 students provided general comments about the day, 9 commented that the whole day had been useful.

Comments included:

'Whole day was very useful and informative. Information given quickly but covered everything, helped to keep us occupied.'

'All very informative – worth the trip.'

'Benefited from getting advice about studying at university and how this is put into practice.'

In answer to 'What was the main reason for attending?', 62 students answered the question; 58 of these identified that the 5 main reasons for attending were to:

Main Reasons For Attending	Total
Be more prepared for university life	38%
Find out more information about the University	21%
Get to know the University campus and the facilities for students	17%
Find out what help and support is available to students	14%
Find out more about student financial support	10%

In response to 'Were there any aspects of the day that you did not find useful?', 18 students answered the question, providing qualitative comments about aspects of the day that they did not find useful. 5 comments related to the Foundation Year session, 3 related to the campus tour and there were 2 comments each recorded, regarding Mature Student Issues, Budgeting, Study Skills, Student Finance and the general organisation of the event.

Comments included:

'Foundation workshop explained more about student life than about the Foundation Course.'

'Study skills – overall a good workshop but didn't cover anything I was not previously aware of.'

'The student finance talk, it was a bit boring just repeated what was said in Student Loan book.'

These comments highlight the dilemmas which become salient when providing generic information to diverse ability groups of students, as students often present themselves with differing levels of both knowledge and confidence prior to their entry into higher education.

In response to 'Were there aspects of the pre-entry day that you would change?', 21 students made comments with four key themes emerging, these concerned:

- registration at the event,
- timetables for the event,
- length of the event / workshops
- dispersed venues used for the workshops.

The comments regarding registration centred on the length of time it took to register. Delays were caused at registration, in part, due to the large number of students attending (**Appendix D**). 2 students commented that the event was too long, whilst another 2 contradicted these opinions and thought that the workshops should have been shorter. However, one student thought the event should have been run over three days:

'There were 15 subjects and it was hard to decide which to do as every single one was very important and I wanted to be at each of them. It would be better to make it an optional three day event for those who wish to attend each one.'

23 students provided additional comments, with the majority of students indicating that they had found the day beneficial.

Comments included:

'Everyone has been very friendly and helpful. It has helped with lots of anxieties about returning to full time education.'

'The staff and helpers were very friendly, helpful and informative. I found the Pre-entry day to be very worthwhile and recommend other people coming to future events.'

'Overall it was enjoyable and gave me an insight to uni life.'

2 students made comments about University-wide issues. One comment related to a lack of car parking facilities for students and the other comment concerned the problems some student parents have regarding the impact of not knowing their timetable of lectures in advance has on childcare arrangements. Students with children were in agreement concerning timetables:

'I agree with the other students who said that people with childcare should be able to get an earlier timetable because it would make life a lot easier.'

Student Ambassador and Facilitator Feedback

Besides collecting feedback from those applicants attending the event, evaluation forms were also completed by Student Ambassadors and Workshop Facilitators who assisted with the events (Appendix F). All contributors made positive comments concerning the event and three commented that it had been very informative. Facilitators provided a range of feedback about the event which proved useful in terms of further evaluation.

Comments included:

'The event seemed well organised... and the programme seemed varied and appeared to meet students' needs.'

'I think the event went very well indeed and the participants seemed engaged and encouraged.'

Facilitators and Student Ambassadors were asked to make recommendations concerning the future planning of events. 2 facilitators suggested running shorter sessions but for different reasons:

'I would like more space between workshops to allow for a handover and access to PowerPoint.'

'Run shorter sessions and give more time for participants to get from venue to venue.'

Because of the large number of students initially registering for the event, TIPS had to utilise rooms in different buildings at MMU which impacted on students physically getting from one venue to another in a short space of time. The large numbers of students attending also impacted on registration processes and some comments reflected this:

'It might be better to stagger registration a little say 8.45 – 9.30 and provide coffee and toast.'

'Registration to start earlier and divided into 2 alphabetical splits.'

With hindsight a staggered registration system would have been more effective (Appendix D).

Facilitators and Student Ambassadors were also asked to note down any 'Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)' which had been asked on the day by student applicants. This information proved useful at a later date when designing an Induction 2004 FAQ booklet as a response to appropriate information being made available for new students studying at MMU. Questions which were raised by students at the pre-entry day formed 5 key themes and reflected common concerns:

Library:

Where do I get my library card from?

Where is the library?

Is there off campus access to library resources?

Student accommodation:

Where are the halls located?

How much does halls accommodation cost?

Childcare:

When will I get my timetable as this will affect what childcare needs arranging?

Finance:

How much debt will I be in if I come to university?

How do I get student discounts, such as railcards?

Can any benefits be claimed by students?

What can I do about a delay in funding assessment?

Study skills:

How do I write an essay?

What study skills support is available?

Pre-entry Event Analysis – MMU (Cheshire, 2003)

50 students indicated that they would be attending the event at MMU Cheshire on 15th September 2003 and of these, 34 actually attended (level 2 pre-entry). The pre-entry event at MMU Cheshire paralleled the workshop format which had been delivered in Manchester. Because of the smaller scale of the event, it was decided to let students plot their own workshops on the day, instead of having a previously selected timetable, as at the Manchester event, which worked well. The rural nature of the campus added to the relaxed atmosphere of the day. Students asked a number of questions throughout the day as well as during the final question and answer session. All students were asked to complete a pre-entry day feedback form on the day. A total of 18 pre-entry day feedback forms were completed, giving a response rate of 53%.

In answer to 'Which aspects of the day did you find most useful?', in total, 17 students answered this question, 13 students identified specific workshops as being the most useful aspect of the day, of these 5 students identified more than one workshop.

Workshop	Total
Students Union	28%
Finance	17%
Campus Tour	17%
Budgeting	11%
Foundation Year	11%
Study Skills	6%
Mature Students	5%
Library Tour	5%

Another 4 students made a general comment about the event, these included:

'All workshops attended were really informative and helped put my mind at rest about aspects of university life that I was unsure of.'

'Finding out how I could plan my study time well.'



In response to 'What was your main reason for attending?' students identified 3 main themes for attending:

Reason	Total
Preparation for university life	33%
To find out more about student life	28%
Familiarisation of the University campus	17%

In answer to 'Were there any aspects of the day that you did not find useful?' 33% students made comments about the event, these included:

'Study skills-most of the information covered as part of the Access Course core skills programme.'

'Mature student session was a re-iteration of study skills/ budgeting/ student finance – didn't really aim at how to cope with being older.'

In response to 'Were there any aspects of the pre-entry day that you would change?' 7 students made comments, most of which centred on receiving more information in advance of the day itself.

Other comments included:

'More hands on classes, more interactive classes or more forms of presentation like the video in the student union class for example.'

'Possibly an 'ice breaker' session.'

Student Ambassador and Facilitator Feedback

All the Student Ambassadors who completed feedback forms for the event at MMU Cheshire commented that it was well organised. One commented that:

'There was a fair turn-out considering the campus size. People appeared impressed with the event and University facilities.'

Facilitator feedback also endorsed the success of the event:

'...feedback was positive. Students reported less 'nerves' about starting their course and feeling more confident.'

Recommendations and comments made by Facilitators highlighted the need for some minor modifications to be made to the programme, such as combining the Careers and Volunteering (CoMMUni) sessions. Most of the staff saw the events as invaluable to students:

'A very useful event, which could benefit all future students at MMU. I think the event needs to be run again next year, with more University staff on hand to help.'

'Good, a generally well attended event, students appeared to find it useful so I would be happy to be involved in future events, though I do feel that there were perhaps more than were needed at the panel at the end of the day.'

Frequently Asked Questions raised by students at the Cheshire pre-entry day also included:

Travel information:

Where are the bus stops and train stations located?

When does the inter-site bus run?

Student accommodation:

What do the rooms in halls look like?

Conclusion

The number of students who attended the TIPS pre-entry events highlighted that there is clearly a demand for these orientation and preparation for HE 'type' of events. Although TIPS did not hold pre-entry events for students enrolled for 2004 entry, the Foundation Year adapted the model used at the TIPS pre-entry events and held their own pre-entry event for their applicants on 6th September 2004 where TIPS delivered a workshop on, *'Finance-What You Need To Know Before You Come'*.

This type of orientation and guidance is particularly useful for students entering through Clearing, who are at greater risk of dropping out during the first year of their study at university. For the TIPS pre-entry events, we were able to identify and target pre-entry support at Foundation Year students entering through Clearing procedures and, upon reflection, it is recommended that future pre-entry events need to be offered to all Clearing applicants. A method of referral may need to be adopted during Clearing to offer support and orientation to such vulnerable groups of students as a critical part of MMU's or any other educational institutions' retention strategy. Bringing together staff with a range of expertise ultimately provides an effective way of offering advice and guidance to applicants who are at the point of entry to higher education.

In addition to staff embedding the TIPS model for 2004 applicants, a TIPS resource pack compiling of pre-entry materials was distributed to students holding offers at MMU for 2004 entry

by selected departments, who took seriously the Widening Participation agenda and the efforts of the TIPS service to address such agendas (**Appendix O**). These are examples of how TIPS' good practice has been sustained and embedded across student/practitioner frameworks in different ways.

The analysis of feedback from the TIPS events has identified a number of key concerns which students have, about further study which ought to be addressed if future diverse groups of students are to be successfully supported when they attempt to make a smooth and seamless transition into higher education. Pre-entry events are one proactive method of providing a forum for students to raise their immediate concerns and seek responsive advice and guidance. Data from the MMU student records database (HEMIS-Higher Education Management Information System) confirmed that of the two hundred and twenty students who registered for the pre-entry event in Manchester (Level 1 Pre-entry) and/or received support in the form of the pre-entry workshops alongside materials (Level 2 Pre-entry), one hundred and eighty six or (84.5%) of these applicants held live enrolment status and were registered as students on courses at MMU in 2003 (**Appendix G**).

With regards to MMU Cheshire, of the 50 students who received similar pre-entry support, 43 or (86%) were registered as holding live enrolment status as MMU students (**Appendix G**). From this evidence-based practice, these findings, can be evaluated as having implications for practitioners concerned with both recruitment and retention.



4.2: Induction Phase at MMU 2003

Induction week followed in the third week of September 2003 and the TIPS team saw this as an opportunity to raise the profile of the new service. Flyers and posters displaying the TIPS logo were produced and distributed around the campuses during 'Freshers Week' and the flyers were also included in Foundation Year Student Guides which are distributed at enrolment. Information about TIPS was included in the general introduction to Student Services talk which is frequently delivered to new students at University. Posters were also produced which overviewed the TIPS service and these were strategically positioned in and around all University buildings in Greater Manchester and South Cheshire.

It was felt by the team that it was difficult to promote the 'On-Course' service to our target groups as this would highlight exclusion of new students *outside* the target groups, therefore TIPS, as a new service, was offered to all *new* students at MMU whether in Year Zero (Foundation Year), in Year One of study or for new postgraduate students.

It was decided that tracking of 'target groups' was to be extracted at the end of the project and those students who would be mapped as 'outside' of our target groups could then be clearly identified as part of the 'added value cohort' alongside mature students from Access pathways, already identified as an additional target group in need of support.

TIPS continued to offer an overview of their service to students at 'Course' level throughout the academic year of 2003/04 (**Appendix H**). From this mapping of the transition from the 'Pre-entry stage' of HE to the 'On-Course stage' of HE, the recommendation reached was that Induction should be seen as a process, not an event and as students were so overwhelmed with both the new experience and the wealth of information that they received during Induction week, this procedural approach has been recognised as beneficial, resulting in many more students accessing the TIPS Service.

4.3: University-wide On Course Support at MMU for 2003 Entrants

4.3a: Analysis-TIPS Support on an Individual Level

A one-to-one MMU student menu (**Appendix I**) for face-to-face sessions was offered 'On-Course' by the TIPS advice team in response to direct student feedback. Additional email and telephone advice (office landline and mobile) and guidance complemented other modes of TIPS support. Menus were made available to MMU students so that they could highlight their required support. The menu was designed to 'unpack' finance concerns, study skills, C.V. support, general advice and guidance regarding HE issues, specific advice for mature students and support for coping with exams. Again, as with the Pre-entry Workshop Menu, students were able to outline their key areas of required support which facilitated the complex profiling of the changing demand and context of HE from students' own perspectives.

Students also accessed TIPS support through channels outside of the general marketing and publicity promoted by the team. These were further identified as engaging with the TIPS service through two main routes, either via staff referral or self-referral (**Appendix M**).

Throughout the 03/04 academic year, TIPS offered MMU students one-to-one support and guidance. This was captured using a case recording system (**Appendix J**) and these detailed case notes were further used as part of a case study analysis which enabled scrutiny of the types of TIPS support accessed by a diverse body of students. During one academic year, 91 different students accessed the 1-2-1 support service over 164 sessions. Some students paid more visits than others.

Mapping of the Frequency of TIPS One-to-One Visits Accessed By Students

Number of People	Number of Visits
63	1
12	2
5	3
4	4
2	5
1	6
1	7
1	8
1	12
1	16

Upon scrutiny of this data, what was interesting was that 69% of students who accessed the one-to-one service requested one-to-one support only once, yet 6% of the students collectively had 30% of the total individual support sessions delivered. This demonstrates a certain level of benefit to offering this type of support in terms of maximising resources, as only a small percentage of students who accessed this type of service needed regular and continuous support. This contradicts circular arguments amongst educational practitioners that 'at risk/widening participation' students tend to draw heavily on staff resources. Interestingly, the small number of students who accessed the TIPS service at the highest frequency can be defined as those students for whom English is their second language which signifies the need for further targeted support for this student group.

A supplementary form of data collection was generated by advisers who collated a weekly field diary. All students who accessed TIPS support were sent a questionnaire to complete regarding their views on the overall support service that they had individually received (**Appendix U**). Adopting such methods helped to contribute to a rich picture of the issues and concerns both in play for the students and the TIPS advisers whilst evaluating measurements adopted which critically question the usefulness of such open-ended support models.

When analysing one-to-one sessions, examining categories of students that the TIPS service supported in terms of their year of current study, it can be seen from drawing upon the following tables, that Study Skills support was the number one requested support from any year group of students. In addition, Manchester based first year undergraduates sought support from TIPS advisors more than any other group regarding this topic. This highlights, when drawing upon these findings and also considering the workshop selections of students who attended pre-entry events held earlier in the year, that from an undergraduate perspective, the need for university level Study Skills Support is placed high on their agenda. Study Skills support, then, needs to be recognised as a key requirement for students by support services at both the

pre-entry and post-entry phases alongside concerns about issues surrounding Finance. These two areas appear to make up the key drivers that can facilitate or act as barriers to the successful transition into and through the first year of higher education. This also, to a significant extent, appears to hold true for second year and final year students and therefore needs to be built into curriculum design at all stages of the undergraduate experience.

Mapping Of Type of One-to-One TIPS Support By Year Group (Total=164 sessions)

Manchester- One to one support	Foundation Year	1st Year	2nd Year	Final Year	Postgraduate
Study Skills	5%	22%	15%	17%	2%
IT	0	1%	0	0	0
English/ second language	0	3%	0	0	0
Finance	5%	7%	6%	7%	0
Course change	1%	2%	3%	2%	0
Accommodation	0	1%	0	2%	0
C.V support	0	1%	1%	0	0
Totals	11%	35%	25%	27%	2%

MMU Cheshire- One to one support	Foundation Year	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	Postgraduate
Study Skills	0	21.5%	14%	21%	0
IT	0	0	0	0	0
English as a second language	0	0	0	0	0
Finance	0	21.5%	14%	7%	0
Course Change	0	0	0	0	0
Accommodation	0	0	0	0	0
C.V support	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	0	43%	28%	29%	0

4.3b: TIPS Support at Course Level

In addition to the one-to-one student menu, the TIPS service was offered to students at Course level, through liaison with tutors. This more structured approach has demonstrated one way of how a centralised service can be very pragmatic and empowering for those embarking on vocational courses which attract a high number of diverse students from non-academic backgrounds. For example, TIPS offered assignment support to students based at the Didsbury campus on Youth and Community and Social Work programmes. This entailed more than the traditional format offered by central pastoral services. This involved sitting in on weekly lectures, offering assignment support drop-ins directly after lectures, as well as mini-focus group sessions. Through this level of practitioner investment, skills areas, which students felt most anxious about, were identified and used to shape further tailored support. As a result, basic I.T. workshops were developed which evolved from active dialogues surrounding anxieties about student technological inadequacies during focus groups. By liaising with Course Leaders, TIPS advisers were able to understand the demands on students through practitioner immersion in Course outlines and an insight into relevant assignment briefs. We offered each student the opportunity to be supported through drafts of assignments, in terms of style and structure but not content, so

that they could transfer knowledge to their future assignments whilst developing long-term, self-directed learning frameworks.

Bespoke TIPS – Critical Reading & Writing For Embroidery Students at MMU

As a result of the 'TIPS On Tour' Project awareness raising sessions, at which staff across MMU were informed about the TIPS service (Appendix H) and were notified how students could be supported during the academic year, requests were received for Study Skills support from specific courses. One of these was for first year students on the B.A. (Honours) Embroidery programme.

Because of the practical nature of the programme, students have only small amounts of written work to submit in the first year and therefore little opportunity to develop essay writing skills up to 'traditional' academic standards. Through liaison with the Course leader, TIPS developed a two-hour session which was subject-specific for these students. This was informed by essay questions provided by the Course leader. A session plan was developed which incorporated relevant active learning techniques. For example, having explained how to critically evaluate texts, students were given a piece of appropriate text to analyse.

Twelve students attended the session and they identified needing support with various aspects of planning and writing essays. All the students actively engaged in the session and raised other issues and problems related to their study: these were, lack of understanding on how to do footnotes and endnotes, feeling uncomfortable about using the University library and not knowing how to get support in researching information, not feeling confident about I.T. and producing word processed assignments. These issues were addressed in the interactive session. Students were also given a number of study skills handouts which TIPS advisers had collated from a range of sources to assist them in planning and writing essays.

At the end of the session student feedback was collected. Comments included:

'Really useful session, I feel more confident now about the way I will approach my work.'

'Really helpful – especially with footnotes – endnotes – I understand them now! Feel more confident to start my essay now – with a whole plan for my essay.'

'The session was extremely helpful and very useful. I am very clear on how to write an essay now and think I can tackle it confidently. The session has empowered me.'

This identifies that tailored sessions, such as these, can benefit students in their preparation for assignments. It also provides a forum for students to raise additional problems which they are experiencing and gives them the confidence to seek guidance from relevant support staff.

TIPS was contacted during the 2004/05 academic year and asked to provide this session again for new students on the course. As TIPS did not continue as a service after December 2004, it was not possible to deliver, although the request was re-directed to the Learning Support team within central Student Services at MMU.

4.3c: TIPS Support at Faculty Level

TIPS ran Faculty workshops from the beginning of the Autumn term on Budgeting Tips, Hardship Fund Applications, C.V. building, Critical Reading and Writing, Writing For Academia and Presentation Skills (**Appendix H**).

During the Spring term, TIPS, in conjunction with Learning Support, offered Exam Revision workshops at Course and Faculty level for students entering first exam sitting within the University. Further workshops and drop-ins were also offered during the Summer term for students doing re-sit examinations.

Publicity

Posters and flyers – Eye-catching posters had been designed and printed through the University Design Studio. These were distributed to the reception areas of the different Faculties. Flyers were also distributed through the Student Information Centre and various refectories across the University.

Electronic Notice Boards – Memos were distributed to the reception areas within all the Faculties. Most receptions have electronic notice boards or display monitors which publicise events. The TIPS workshop times and places were displayed up to and including the day of delivery.

All Student E-mail – Workshops were publicised by all student e-mail.

All Staff Email – Academic staff were notified of the workshops via all-staff email.

The email system generated some staff queries about workshops. However, it was observed that not all staff were aware of the workshops and that information was not always being passed on to students. This suggests that some tutors may be unaware of the appropriate student support services available or the value of referring students to them.

Finance TIPS

TIPS Budgeting and Hardship Fund Application Workshop Evaluation

It was decided that a series of Budgeting and Hardship Fund workshops would take place, across MMU, during the Autumn term. This would form the basis of a strategy to prevent student hardship by raising awareness of financial issues and developing money management skills.

Student poverty can have a detrimental effect on both academic performance and retention. Many students have to take on part-time jobs to make ends meet; others find the financial burden too difficult and, as a result, drop-out of university.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of these workshops, all the students were asked to complete a questionnaire and a record was kept of the attendance. The data gathered formed the basis of evaluation.

Workshop Design-Common features

Workshops started with a short presentation which introduced the topic and gave an overview of the subject matter. Copies of the slides were distributed to the students as handouts.

Budgeting Workshop

The presentation introduced the students to the concept of budgeting, outlining the statutory sources of student funding and other potential sources of income. The presentation was followed by an exercise where the students calculated their income and expenditure on budget sheets provided by the TIPS adviser. A question and answer session brought the workshop to a close.

Hardship Application Workshop

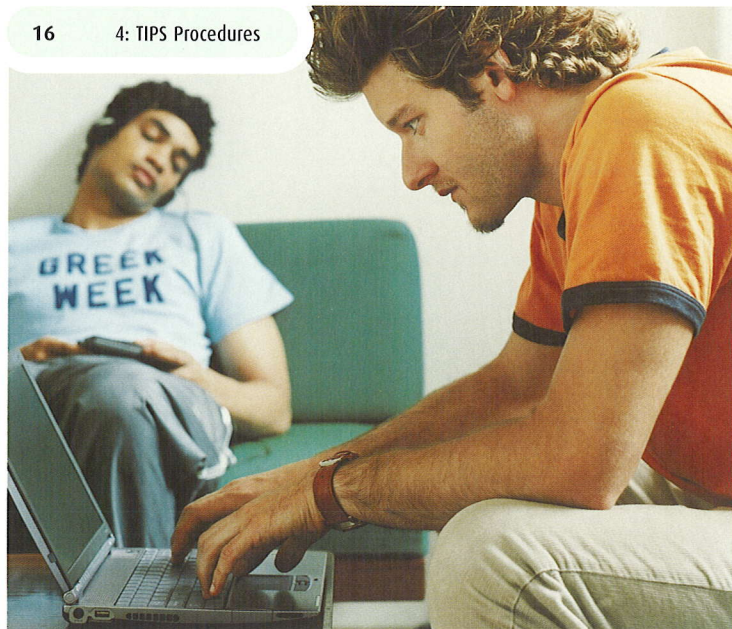
As with the Budgeting workshop, students were informed of the main sources of statutory funding and other sources of income. They were reminded of the qualifying criteria for both Hardship Loans and the Hardship Fund. Students without application forms were given copies alongside copies of the slides and the relevant guidance notes. The TIPS adviser then guided the students through the application procedure. This was followed by an informal question and answer session.

Implementation

Most of the students found the presentation useful in providing background information on student funding and alternative sources of income. In a couple of cases it highlighted gaps in students knowledge about funding opportunities i.e. Child Tax Credit for student parents. In the case of Hardship Applications, it clarified both the procedure and the evidence requirements.

Materials

Most students found the workshop materials useful. The budgeting materials enabled students to start their own monthly budget and calculate their income against expenditure. The Hardship Application handouts reinforced the guidance notes supplied with the Hardship Fund Application form.



Attendance:

Budgeting Workshop

The attendance for the workshops was extremely poor; in many cases there was nil attendance.

Budgeting Workshop

Total Attendees: 2

Total Number of respondents: 1

Workshop Site	Attendees
Alsager	0
Aytoun	0
Crewe	0
Didsbury	0
Elizabeth Gaskell	0
Geoffrey Manton	0
Hollings	0
John Dalton	2

Hardship Application Workshop

These were better attended, but still disappointing, considering the volume of Hardship Applications dealt with by the Student Financial Support Unit¹.

Total Attendees: 14

Total Number of respondents: 11

Workshop Site	Attendees
Alsager	6
Aytoun	1
Chatham	0
Crewe	1
Didsbury	0
Elizabeth Gaskell	0
Geoffrey Manton	4
Hollings	0
John Dalton	2

How do you rate the workshops materials?

Five respondents rated them as very good; five as good; and one as average.

How do you rate the workshop presentation?

Five respondents rated them as very good; five as good; and one as average.

Which aspects did you find most useful?

Five students found the explanation of the application procedure most useful; three, the areas of financial support available to them (including benefits); two, the supporting information and evidence required; two, the handouts supplied; and one said the workshop wasn't too impersonal.

What was your main reason for attending?

Five respondents cited financial hardship; five, wanted to learn about the application process; one, because of a previous unsuccessful application; and one, out of interest.

Were there any aspects you did not find useful?

Two respondents felt that some of the presentation was not applicable to them, but one qualified her answer by saying "...that's understandable". One respondent said "no seriously it was helpful." The other respondents stated none or left this question blank.

If you have rated any of the above poor or very poor please state why?

One respondent said "not at all", the others left the question blank or said no.

Were there any aspects that you would change?

One respondent suggested more information on methods of getting assistance; another felt that no changes were necessary.

Any other comments?

One respondent suggested examples of good and bad applications would have been useful; another said that it helped make up his mind regarding future action; one said that it was refreshing to know that people cared; another found feedback from the facilitator useful; one respondent said 'thank you'.

Factors affecting attendance

There may have been a number of factors that contributed towards poor attendance. However, the following list is based on conjecture and anecdotal evidence.

- Bad timing of year that workshops were delivered
- Some students do not know how to access student email
- The publicity materials were insufficient or badly placed by Faculty staff
- Students felt discouraged from attending due to the Project criteria²
- Some teaching staff did not promote the workshops
- The workshops were badly timed³ and clashed with lectures
- Students did not see the need to attend

Feedback

The overall feedback from both sets of workshops was generally positive. Students who attended the workshops found both the content and delivery good. Only one respondent rated the workshop (Budgeting) as average. It was suggested that examples of good and bad applications should be included with the workshop notes. The University Student Finance department were in the process of creating these, but they were not ready in time for the TIPS workshops.

¹ MMU Student Financial Support Unit received 500 Hardship Applications between September and December 2003

² Based on anecdotal feedback from the Student/Staff forum at MMU Cheshire

³ Staff at the MMU Business School in Aytoun pointed out that the workshop had poor attendance as it coincided with the Islamic festival of Eid and it also fell on a Friday.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although the workshops were well received by the students who attended them, they were not cost effective in terms of project time and resources. This was largely due to the poor attendance figures, in relation to the amount of time required to set up and deliver the workshops.

Workshop provision needs to be demand led, rather than supply led and embedded into departmental student welfare provision. In this way, student awareness of the workshops can be raised and they can be timetabled to suit lecture times. Partnerships with other service providers e.g. the Student Union Advice Centre may provide alternative workshops that are 'more timely'.

The project considered new approaches to publicity, as traditional means appeared to be ineffective. Posters in isolation can be eye-catching, but tend to get lost when a number of different posters are competing for attention. Flyers can be used to target individuals, but are often cleared away before students have a chance to read them. All-student emails can be effective, but only if the students know how to access the student email facility. Staff can effectively disseminate information about workshops, but only if they are aware of them by reading the all-staff digests of messages.

In order to overcome these limitations, the project implemented the following:

- Flyers being distributed, together with Hardship Application forms, advertising the TIPS one-to-one service
- The development of a comprehensive on-line TIPS resource centre
- Staff development workshops took place, in the University faculties, to raise awareness of the role of TIPS as an additional pastoral service

In conclusion, TIPS continued to provide support on Finance and Budgeting through one-to-one advice and guidance throughout the course of the academic year during 2003/04. Efforts were made to publicise this service through the Student Information Centre, Students' Union and University Reception areas as well as through established Central Student Support Services.

Exam Revision Workshops 2004

In the run up to the exam period at MMU, TIPS, in conjunction with Learning Support and the Faculty Student Support Officer based in Humanities, Law and Social Science worked in collaboration to develop exam revision sessions for all students. This involved collating a booklet of exam revision materials and devising a presentation to deliver at a number of scheduled workshops across the 7 Faculties within the University. Materials from a number of sources were evaluated for their relevance and usefulness in the collation of the booklet. Items in the booklet included the exam and revision presentation itself, revision techniques, a revision timetable, relaxation techniques, how to tackle the exam itself, definitions of academic keywords and signposting to useful web addresses relating to exam revision (downloadable at www.mmu.ac.uk/tips).

Advisers from the three Student Support services covered the delivery of the sessions in a collaborative manner. Workshops were scheduled in every faculty within the University and at different times throughout the day to enable students with varied lecture schedules to attend. These were advertised by all-student email and flyers. Posters promoted the series in each Faculty and on electronic notice-boards within University buildings. During the Spring term, 20 workshops were held, starting on the 1st March 2004 and running throughout the Spring term until 30th March 2004. A total of 323

students attended these sessions. Student feedback was collected at the sessions, with 194 students completing evaluation forms.

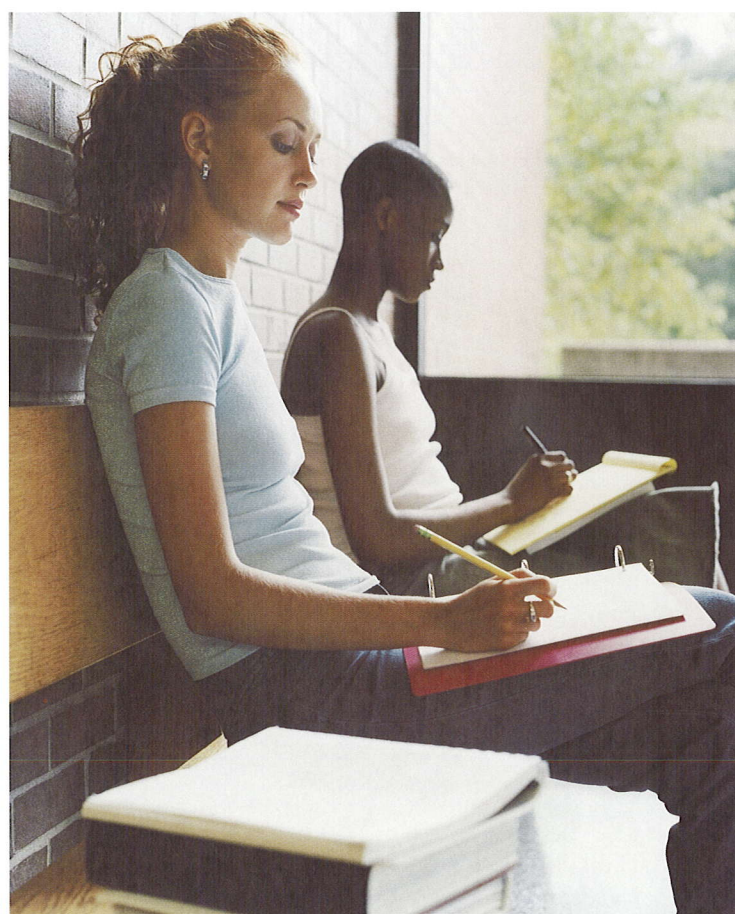
At the beginning of the Summer term a further series of exam revision workshops were scheduled. These ran between 27th April and 3rd June 2004, with 34 sessions being held. On the whole these were not as well attended as workshops delivered in the Spring term. A total of 131 students attended. 82 students completed feedback forms following the sessions.

After the Spring and Summer term exam workshop programmes were complete, TIPS and Learning Support met to evaluate the sessions and plan a series of exam re-sit sessions. Because the aim was to highlight the re-sit sessions to as many students as possible, 7,500 flyers to advertise the sessions were produced and distributed to departments so as to be included with re-sit notification letters sent directly to students. Workshops were also publicised on all-staff and all-student e-mails and electronic boards in faculty buildings. Flyers were distributed to all communal buildings, such as the Students' Union and student refectory.

Copies of the 'Exam Revision Pack' were made available to students at Learning Supports' reception point. 23 packs were recorded as being issued, mainly by academic staff, but this figure may under-represent the total as it relied on staff to take student details when giving out the packs.

The exam re-sit workshops ran from 21st July until 12th August 2004. 10 workshops were scheduled in faculties across the university. Despite being well advertised, the sessions were not well attended, with only 17 students attending in total. This may have been due to a number of factors. Some students undoubtedly, would have already gone home for the Summer and no longer be in Manchester, therefore only students living locally would be likely to attend.

The student evaluation of the sessions gave an indication of their usefulness and relevance in the run up to the exam period. An evaluation of the feedback from the Spring, Summer and re-sit sessions was compiled.



Exam Revision Workshops – Spring 2004

In question 1, students were asked to rate the workshop materials, the presentation and the following drop-in session at which students could ask individual questions and receive one-to-one support. In total during this term, 185 students rated the workshop materials, 194 the workshop presentation and 149 the drop in session.

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
How do you rate the workshop materials?	45%	51%	4%	0	0
How do you rate the workshop presentation?	49%	41%	9%	1%	0
How do you rate the drop-in session?	31%	49%	20%	0	0

In answer to question 2, 'Which aspects of the workshop did you find most useful?', 172 students gave answers but mostly these could be divided into 6 main themes.

Most useful aspect	Total
Revision Techniques	37%
Handouts	19%
Exam techniques	15%
Time management	11%
Exam worries/ dealing with stress	9%
All aspects of workshop	9%

Comments about which aspect was the most useful included:

'It was particularly helpful and useful the way in which the whole session was presented, gave good indication of how to manage time and ways to structure and organise exam timetable.'

'I found the handouts useful and the glossary at the back, as I needed particular words explained and now they have been.'

'Some of the revision tips they gave such as taking regular breaks, eating healthily etc.'

'Everything, as a mature student, who has not sat an exam since 1998 all info useful – approach to revision and actual exam.'

'Planning essay questions during the exam.'

'I think I've learnt other ways of revising and will actually put it into practice – normally I struggle revising but this really helped me.'

'Good overall session on revision and techniques – Every aspect useful.'

Other comments included were:

'It put the exam and revision into context.'

'Past exam papers.'

'Tips on bananas.'

'Research. Using ATHENS.'

'Telling us where to find the past exam papers was useful.'

In answer to question 3, 'What was your main reason for attending?', 173 students responded. The majority of these could be divided into 4 themes. 14 students commented that it had been a compulsory session as part of their course.

Main reason for attending	Total
Revision techniques	58%
Exam worries/ dealing with stress	19%
Exam techniques	15%
Not sat exams for a long time	8%

Comments concerning the main reason for attending included:

'To find out how to structure revision timetables because I had never made one before.'

'Learn as many revision techniques as possible to supplement my own technique.'

'To help motivate myself for revision and gain extra tips, and also to get me in the frame of mind for sitting my exams.'

'Fear of failure and poor planning skills.'

'To plan my revision preparation for exams and to pick up any exam tips.'

Other comments were more general in nature and included:

'Getting as much help towards passing the year as possible.'

'To grasp new learning concepts.'

'Didn't want to miss anything that might be useful'

'To receive handout information that I can read in my own time.'

In response to question 4, 'Were there any aspects of the workshop that you did not find useful?', 115 students indicated 'No' or 'N/A' and 55 did not reply. 24 students provided additional comments. 9 students commented that they already knew how to revise and that the workshop information was basic.

'It was a bit demeaning as I have sat exams before and I know how to revise.'

Although the workshops were generic, some students indicated that they wanted more 'course specific' sessions.

In response to question 5, 'If you have rated any of the above as poor or very poor could you briefly state why?', 44 students stated 'No' or 'N/A' and 152 did not reply. 8 students provided comments, these included:

'For me I found them all good.'

'There's a lot of information but it's brief and straight to the point.'

In answer to question 6, 'Were there any aspects of the workshop that you would change?', 93 students stated 'No' or 'N/A', and 81 did not reply. 20 students made comments. These were varied and included:

'Perhaps more examples of how to construct active revision techniques e.g. flash cards.'

'Try to make students more interactive in the learning process. Maybe put people into small groups to discuss good and not so good revision techniques.'

'To do more on stress handling.'

'A little more clear understanding of structuring essays.'

'How to use the revision materials provided by M.M.U., e.g. internet.'

In answer to question 7, 'Any other comments?', 63 students provided comments. These included:

'Like the way it deals with stress.'

'Do workshops earlier in the year.'

'The workshop has been useful to me and I feel happier about how to tackle my revision.'

'More information regarding understanding the exam questions.'

'Very useful reminder session and helpful tips – got my exam confidence back – Thank you!'

'An excellent presentation and workshop. Full of good explanations about exam procedure and help.'

Exam Revision Workshops – Summer 2004

In question 1, students were asked to rate the workshop materials, the presentation and the following drop-in session at which students could ask individual questions. 82 students rated the workshop materials and the workshop presentation, 68 rated the drop in session.

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
How do you rate the workshop materials?	38%	56%	6%	0	0
How do you rate the workshop presentation?	33%	57%	10%	0	0
How do you rate the drop-in session?	25%	69%	6%	0	0

In answer to question 2, 'Which aspects of the workshop did you find most useful?', 81 responses were received from students, one student did not answer the question. 73 of these could be divided into 6 main themes.

Most useful aspect	Total
Revision Techniques	44%
Exam techniques	27%
Handouts	18%
Time management	4%
Exam worries/ dealing with stress	4%
All aspects of workshop	3%

Comments included:

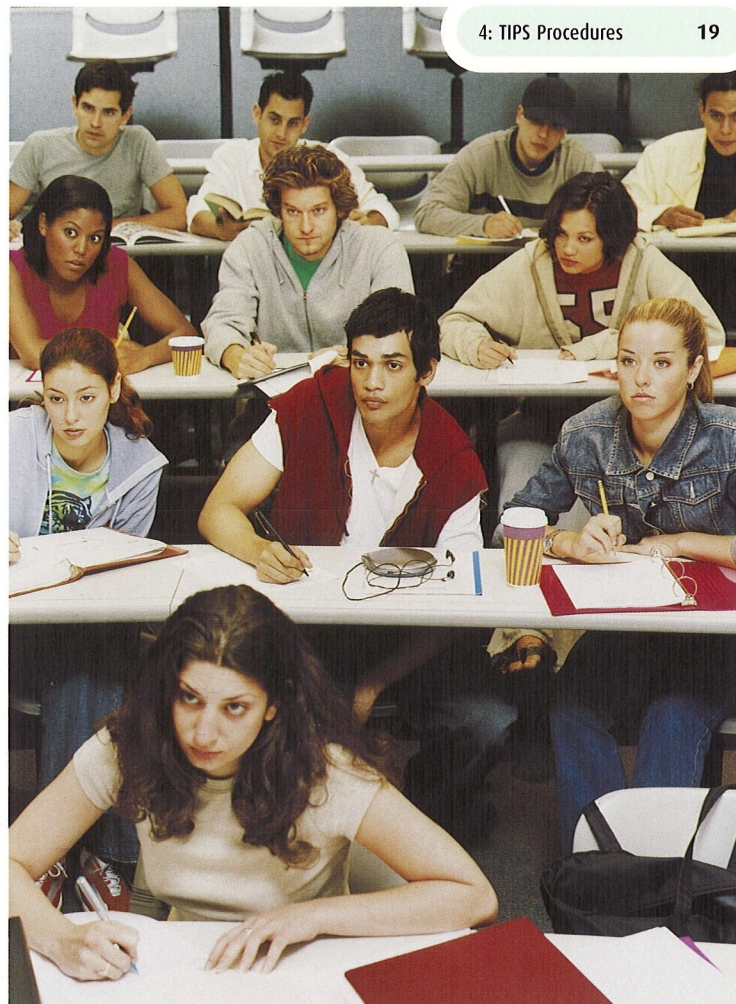
'Advice on techniques such as flash cards was very useful.'

'The active revision techniques and the use of visual memory for during the exams.'

'Time management and managing stress.'

'The handouts – useful tips and advice.'

'Planning of questions at beginning of exam.'



'Essay preparation technique and how to go about answering question with the PEA (Point, Evidence, Analysis technique).'

Other more general comments were also made, these included:

'Information on how to be prepared for exams.'

'Everything given was easily understandable.'

In answer to question 3, 'What was your main reason for attending?', 79 students made comments, whilst 3 did not answer the question. 52 could be divided into 4 broad themes.

Main reason for attending	Number
Revision techniques	52%
Exam worries/ dealing with stress	21%
Exam techniques	19%
Not sat exams for a long time	8%

Comments included:

'Advice and calming guidance from non-lecturer, who was focused on exams not their subjects.'

'Not knowing where to start revising as haven't done any since school 6/7 years ago.'

'Final year exams are very important, my revision techniques are rubbish and need to improve.'

'Stress, I don't know how to go about completing questions within time frame.'

Other general comments included:

'Want to do well on my course.'

'Preparing for first exam I'm going to take at MMU'

In response to question 4, *'Were there any aspects of the workshop that you did not find useful?'*, 38 students stated 'No', 23 did not answer and 4 indicated that it was not applicable. 17 students provided comments. 3 related to the information being too basic.

Comments included:

'Basic exam preparation.'

'All of the information seemed very obvious; however I have sat a lot of these sort of exams before.'

Other comments included:

'Mind maps because it isn't easy to apply.'

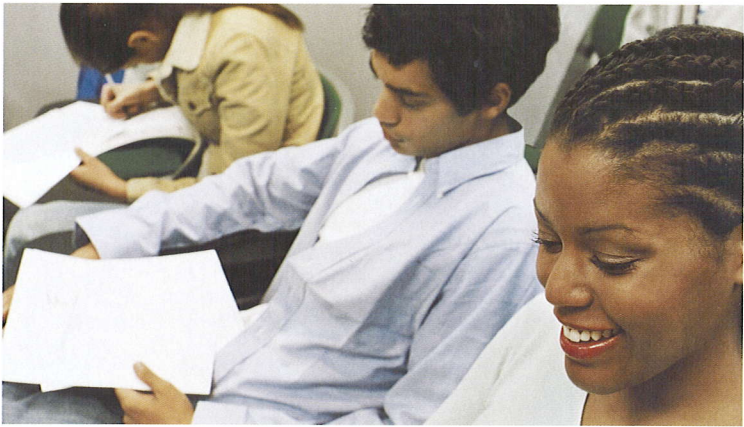
'I felt the workshop was very rushed.'

'Some aspects such as asking lecturers about the content of the exam could have benefited from being done before Easter.'

No comments were given in response to question 5, *'If you have rated any of the materials as poor or very poor could you briefly state why?'*.

In response to question 6, *'Were there any aspects of the workshop that you would change?'*, 22 students answered 'No', 26 students did not answer the question and 6 indicated that it was not applicable. 28 students provided comments. 16 of these could be divided into 4 themes.

Aspect you would change	Total
Hold workshop earlier in year	44%
More interactive session	25%
More subject specific	19%
More on relaxation	12%



Other comments included:

'Better prior notification of the workshop.'

'Different visual techniques.'

'Too much information in the packs – students would prefer to spend more time on their studies, not so regarding so many pages of techniques.'

In response to question 7, *'Any other comments?'*, 40 did not answer the question, 10 students stated 'No', and 5 indicated not applicable. 27 students provided comments.

Comments included:

'It was very useful overall, I recommend it to continue.'

'This has been really useful and helpful and helped me immensely. It's prepared and motivated me for revision – Bring it on!'

'Was a useful session for getting in the mood to revise.'

'Excellent advice, very helpful.'

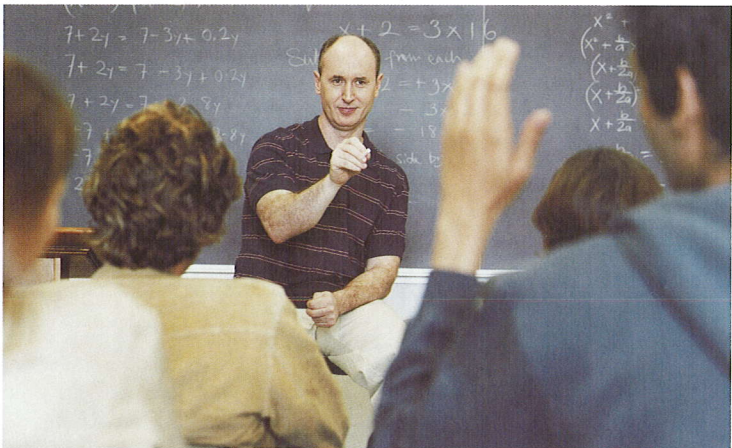
'Good session valuable information.'

'It made me feel better about my exams and gave me some ideas and I had always been used to a certain style of revision with mum testing me but she died so I felt a little lost in my approach till I went to the session'

Exam Revision Workshops-Resit Series During Summer Vacation 2004

In question 1, students were asked to rate the workshop materials, the presentation and the following drop-in session at which students could ask individual questions. 5 students rated the workshop materials, the workshop presentation, and the drop in session.

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
How do you rate the workshop materials?	40%	20%	40%	0	0
How do you rate the workshop presentation?	40%	20%	40%	0	0
How do you rate the drop-in session?	40%	20%	40%	0	0



In answer to question 2, *'Which aspects of the workshop did you find most useful?'*, 5 responses were received. These included:

'It was calming for me to hear things I know or methods I was trying are good ideas – enforcing my revision styles was positive for me.'

'Introduction to different methods.'

'Memory Techniques – Excellent.'

In answer to question 3, *'What was your main reason for attending?'*, 5 responses were received. Comments included:

'Failed previous exams.'

'Re-sit.'

'To get relaxation tips.'

In response to question 4, 'Were there any aspects of the workshop that you did not find useful?', 5 responses indicated 'No'.

In response to question 5, 'If you have rated any of the materials as poor or very poor could you briefly state why?', no comments were received.

In answer to question 6, 'Were there any aspects of the workshop that you would change?', Five responses indicated 'No'.

In response to question 7, 'Any other comments?', 3 comments were received.

'Excellent tips on memory techniques and relaxation and study skills. Well worth any student attending.'

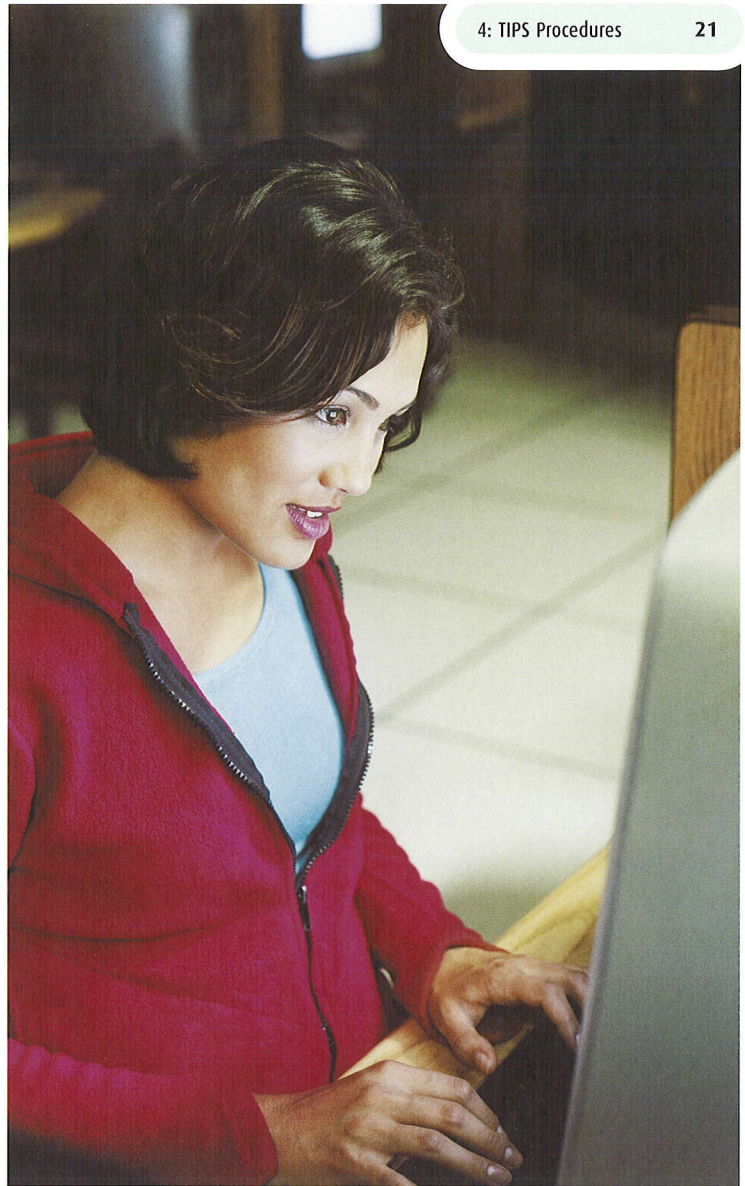
'Very useful workshop.'

'Learning support should have a lecture session so students can meet the people involved and help some students understand there isn't a stigma to getting a little extra help.'

CV Support-2004

CV support was offered by TIPS in a series of four workshops which were run between April and June 2004. Two were held at MMU in Manchester and two at MMU Cheshire. In total 15 students attended the sessions. In addition to the workshops a 'CV Support Resource Pack' was developed for students. These were made available to all students attending the workshops and to other students requesting CV support. Besides those at workshops a further 64 packs were distributed to staff and students as well as a further 120 which were distributed at the TIPS end of project Symposium (Appendix U).

In relation to the workshops students were asked to complete evaluation forms at the sessions. 11 students completed evaluation forms at the workshops. Question 1 asked students to rate the various aspects of the workshop.



	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
How do you rate the workshop materials?	64%	18%	18%	0	0
Curriculum Vitae and Covering Letters	36.5%	36.5%	27%	0	0
Workshop Slides	27%	46%	27%	0	0
How do you rate the workshop presentation?	37%	45%	18%	0	0
How do you rate the workshop facilitator?	46%	54%	0	0	0

Question 2 asked students 'Is there anything about the materials or presentation you would like changed?', 9 replied 'No' and a further 2 provided comments:

'In future, it might be useful for attendees to bring a copy of their own C.V. 's and get small groups to discuss the C.V. of each person during the session.'

'Your visual aids can be improved and the workshops could be made much more specific to subjects/vocational areas.'

Question 3 asked 'Are there any additional materials you would like to see included?', 10 students stated 'No' or did not answer the question.

'Yes, some materials or a workshop aimed specifically at helping students to become professional in their presentation, themselves and their work.'

In response to Question 4, 'What was your main reason for attending?', 11 students provided comments. These included:

'To clarify what a C.V. should be.'

'Get more information on how to improve my C.V. and what to include.'

'Uncertainty of covering letters and also forms of C.V.'

Question 5 asked 'Which aspect of the workshop did you find most useful?', 6 students commented on the usefulness of the handouts. Others related to the C.V. advice given in the presentation.

Comments included:

'Handouts and a person to answer questions and suggest contacts for further info.'

'It was nice that the session was open to discussion and questions.'

'C.V. advice and the types of C.V. 's that can be drawn up.'

Question 6 asked 'Were there any aspect of the workshop that you did not find useful?', 10 students commented 'No', whilst one made reference to the overheads not being as good as PowerPoint.

In relation to Question 7 which asked 'If you have rated any of the above as Poor or Very Poor could you briefly state why?', 1 student commented:

'Slides difficult to see because I am visually impaired.'

In response to Question 8, 'If you have rated any of the above as Good or very Good could you briefly state why?', 9 students provided a comment. These included:

'I felt the points raised were succinct and practical – the handouts were in depth.'

'Useful tips and advice.'

'The C.V. and application booklet seem to be very comprehensive and cover everything I need.'

Question 9 asked, 'Were there any aspects of the workshop that you would change?', only 1 comment was given:

'More people – group discussion possibly.'

In response to Question 10, 'Any other comments?', 2 comments were provided:

'Include TIPS e-mail address in promotional pack for further contact.'

'The advice given on C.V. and letters was very good and will help me to improve my current C.V.'

The student feedback of the workshop sessions was, on the whole, positive with students valuing them. TIPS had planned to run further sessions but because of a staffing shortage on the team, caused by the loss of one adviser, no further C.V. workshops were scheduled. Nevertheless, students were still able to access C.V. support via the one-to-one sessions or students could obtain a C.V. Resource Pack from TIPS staff.

4.3d: TIPS Supporting the Supporters

The TIPS team developed a referral system (**Appendix M**) for Student Services staff, tutors, personal tutors and other student support or teaching staff in both the post-16 and HE sectors in order to facilitate signposting of 'vulnerable' students to the TIPS service. Many personal tutors highlighted that they were unsure as to where their role ended and additional support should begin. This highlights the need for further clarification as to the roles and boundaries of the responsibilities of a personal tutor.

In particular, TIPS took a lot of referrals from Learning Support (LS) who were understaffed at the beginning of the academic year 2003/04. TIPS took on board all their study skills referrals (irrespective of year of study of the student so there was further 'added value') so that LS could focus on the disability element of their service until they were back to their full staffing ratio. This is a good example of how the TIPS team have supported a Support Service, accompanying them from a *reactive* back to a *proactive* state.

4.4: TIPS Pre-entry Guidance 2004

TIPS at Visit and Open Days at MMU (Manchester Campuses)

Throughout the year, MMU holds a number of Open and Visit Days for applicants who are considering studying at the University. At these events representatives from core Student Services have information stands, in the central Atrium area, to answer questions and provide an overview of Student Support services within the University. Part of the TIPS role, as a service, was to support and orientate students through their transition into higher education, so a range of advice and support materials were provided at these events.

TIPS Pre-entry advice and guidance was delivered in the form of one-to-one and group sessions. By having a stand at both Visit and Open Days, applicants could talk to an adviser about their concerns and also access information on a range of literature relevant to new students. The group sessions which TIPS delivered at these events were specifically targeted at mature students.

The materials provided by TIPS covered a broad spectrum of information. Some of the literature was written and collated by TIPS advisers, other materials included information published by UCAS, Aimhigher and the Department for Education and Skills. The 'If Only I'd Known' booklets produced by UCAS proved to be popular and is available to order from the UCAS website www.ucas.ac.uk. Whilst some students wanted to collect materials, others wanted more specific information, advice and guidance on a range of student related issues.

Over five Visit Days and three Open Days, TIPS gave specific advice and guidance to 189 students from post-16 institutions and mature applicants considering university study. The table represents the numbers of students advised by TIPS and the type of information and advice given.

Advice sought	Number requesting advice
Mature student advice	38 %
Support available for students with disabilities within MMU	18.5%
Other advice, including advice to students already studying at MMU	14 %
Student financial support	11 %
Study skill support available within MMU	9.5%
UCAS application advice (completion of Personal Statement)	3 %
Accommodation advice	2.5%
Part-time work	2 %
Public transport	0.5%
Childcare	0.5%
Registering with a GP	0.5%

TIPS Pre-entry Guidance In Post-16 Institutions

Pre-entry advice, guidance and workshop delivery in post-16 institutions for 2004 applicants was offered as a further TIPS project strand, with a focus on applying to university, careers guidance and study skills in preparation for HE. As pre-entry guidance for 2003

entry was approached as an event, because we were unable to access students whilst studying for exams in 16-18 provision, pre-entry guidance for 2004 entry was approached in accordance with the ESF bid which addressed this more as a process as more time was available. We developed a 'H.U.G.' collaborative model addressing three key levels of provision for the target institutions.

H = Headstart study skills in preparation for HE

U = U.C.A.S. support

G = General HE information, advice and guidance

In real terms this meant that in conjunction with the Aimhigher Headstart team, we offered the delivery of 'H' for Headstart Study Skills in preparation for HE which is available in on-line and paper-based formats. This can be viewed at www.headstart4U.net. These interactive packages offered practical assessments to similar topics outlined in the student menu and could be accredited by Greater Manchester Open College Network (GMoCN) for 1 unit at level 3 for students who completed all the required assignments.

In conjunction with Education Liaison, MMU, TIPS offered 'U' for UCAS support to students applying to university by advising and supporting students on completion of their UCAS personal statements.

The final level of support offered was 'G' for general HE advice and guidance and the TIPS teams 'collective knowledges' were offered to answer any queries relating to higher education as well as signposting students to other appropriate advice and guidance services and materials.

The CoMMUnity newsletter (Duggan, 2003) was used to facilitate the 'H.U.G.' model as it contained user friendly articles on how to apply to university as well as real case studies, useful website addresses, comprehensive information on finance and other progression related issues surrounding entry into HE. This is downloadable at www.mmu.ac.uk/foundation/newsletters (see issue 4).

4.5: Embedding and Sustainability

Induction Phase for 2004 Entrants-TIPS Resource Materials

TIPS collated as well as developed a plethora of study materials related to the topics highlighted on the Student Menu and these have been offered to all students who have accessed the TIPS service. They are also displayed on stands outside the Learning Support Unit for students to access during out-of-office hours.

Mature Student and Postgraduate Student 2004 packs were particularly successful and there was an inundation of requests from practitioners supporting students entering HE in 2004, highlighting that no other specific materials were readily available to support these groups from any other one source.

Mature Student and Postgraduate Information Packs

The Mature Student and Postgraduate information packs were developed by TIPS to provide pre-entry advice for mature students entering higher education soon to be undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate study. During the early stages of the project, it was decided to extend our remit to include mature students, although this group did not initially form one of TIPS original target groups. The percentage of mature students entering higher education has increased but feedback from early TIPS activity showed that as a group, their specific concerns and needs have

not been fully identified and addressed. Preparation and orientation into higher education is important not only in terms of progression but also in terms of student wellbeing. The development of the 'Mature Student Information Pack', for undergraduate students, and the 'Postgraduate Student Information Pack' has addressed some of the concerns and issues raised by both students and academic staff. Since their inception, they have been further developed and expanded in terms of the information included. This has been in response to both student and staff feedback. Both versions of the pack have been widely distributed.

Distribution of Mature Student and Postgraduate Information Packs

Distribution	Mature Student Packs	Postgraduate Packs
MMU, Faculty of Art and Design	32	132
MMU, Business School	20	27
MMU, Faculty of Food, Clothing & Hospitality	77	142
MMU, Faculty of Health, Social Care & Education	274	545
MMU, Faculty of Humanities, Law & Social Sciences	131	322
MMU, Faculty of Science & Engineering	135	401
Faculty, MMU Cheshire	277	377
Heads of Dept. & other MMU staff	88	23
MMU Open & Visit Days	98	0
Academic Division (MMU)	60	56
Student Union	6	2
Conferences	220	200
Post-16 institutions	180	0
Voluntary Action (Mcr)	100	0
Totals	1,698	2,227

Mature Student Information Pack Evaluation

Rationale

The Mature Student Information Pack was developed in January 2004, as a response to issues raised by a number of mature applicants and current mature undergraduate students at MMU in September 2003. TIPS organised pre-entry days for students intending to enter higher education that year. Mature students who attended the 'mature student workshops' indicated that more information which helped them prepare for higher education would be beneficial. Some of the problems and concerns raised by mature students included:

- The difficulty in understanding the student financial support system, both in terms of what support is available and when to apply. Also not knowing what other benefits they may be entitled to
- Lack of confidence because of no recent experience within the education system
- Unaware of study skills support available



- Alienated by academic language
- Generally fearful about IT, e.g. writing, editing and saving documents; using the Internet; using the search facilities in the library
- Not knowing what support is available or how to access it

Content of pack

The content of the pack was developed and added to over the academic year as new materials became available. Although some of the information included, related to studying at MMU, other generic information was included. For example, information relating to preparing for higher education, study skills and student finance. The pack contained a range of handouts, information booklets and flyers. Handouts were produced by the TIPS team and other support services within MMU, such as the library. Information on student finance was provided through booklets produced by Aimhigher and a TIPS handout on finance and budgeting. Also a 'jargon buster' was included to help demystify academic terminology. Initially, one generic pack was developed but due to staff comments that the information contained in the pack was centred around campuses in Manchester, two versions of the pack were developed; one specifically for students intending to study at MMU Cheshire.

Distribution of Packs

Mature student information packs have been distributed both externally and internally at MMU. Copies were sent to post-16 institutions within TIPS identified target areas of Greater Manchester, Stoke on Trent and Crewe (**Appendix A**). Sample packs were sent to all departments within MMU. Packs were available for mature students at MMU Visit Days from the TIPS information stand. Also packs were distributed to Access students, during departmental talks at Visit Days within the Department of Humanities and Social Science. A full graphical breakdown of where the mature student packs were distributed is provided in the Appendices (**Appendix N**). A total of 1,698 undergraduate, mature student information packs were distributed by TIPS.

Student feedback

An evaluation form with a pre-paid envelope was included in every pack distributed to students in order to obtain feedback. Due to most packs being distributed through a third party, only twelve students completed a feedback form (**Appendix O**).

Summary of key questions and responses

In response to 'What information did you find the most useful and what were the reasons for this?', most students highlighted the usefulness of the information on student finance and study related information. Comments included:

'The information about going back to study i.e. Finding and using information for assignments. This is very useful when you haven't studied for a few years.'

'DFES, Aimhigher booklets – Generic information that's correct no matter which uni accepts you'

'Student Support – info for independent (mature) students as I am struggling to find out what financial help I am entitled to, and where to go.'

'I found it all very useful as I am a mature student, I find the prospect of university very daunting and this information has helped and reassured me.'

'The Jargon Buster, as most pamphlets expect you to know these essential terms.'

'Preparing for University' – as this emphasis is on issues that would also help me out e.g. confidence, anxieties.'

'Info Skills – library info'

Students were asked 'What other information would you have

wanted included in the pack?', three responded that no other information was required. Other responses included:

'Details of clubs / societies. Semester dates.'

'Financial help for overseas students'

'More information regarding subject bursaries'

In response to being asked for 'Any other comments on how the pack could be improved?', comments included:

'I found the pack helpful and informative. Thank you for sending me a copy.'

'I think the pack is excellent.'

'Information for accommodation, maybe including experiences of other mature students.'

'Contents list on the cover letter.'

'No – it was very informative and personal!'

'None – every item is very good.'

'No, very useful and makes you feel supported by the university.'

Conclusion

The Mature Student Information Pack has been valued by both staff, as a resource for students, and by students themselves. Students benefit from targeted support materials but it is noteworthy that they value staff and benefit further from direct, face-to-face student support:

"As a mature student with no previous knowledge of university life the support received by TIPS eased the way forward into the unknown. With so much happening in the prior weeks to starting the course the TIPS team helped with overwhelming amounts of paperwork and contacting various departments reducing the pressure and anxiety felt at a very uncomfortable period"

Since its inception, the pack has been further developed to meet the needs of mature student applicants to higher education. By using a wallet format, inserts could be tailored for specific course intakes and updated on a regular basis.

Postgraduate Information pack evaluation

Rationale

Whilst postgraduate students did not form part of the target group for TIPS support, through the development and distribution of the Mature Student Information Packs, some practitioners within MMU requested if a pack on similar lines could be developed for distribution to postgraduate students. This was particularly articulated at the Learning and Teaching Conference (May, 2004), within the faculty of Health, Social Care and Education, where TIPS disseminated information about the project and distributed the Mature Student Information Pack as an example resource for mature undergraduate applicants (**Appendix H**). The TIPS ethos has been to respond to demands for support identified by both practitioners and students.

Therefore a pack was developed and circulated to interested staff in order to evaluate its usefulness to new postgraduate students. Two versions of the pack were developed; one for distribution at Manchester campuses and the other for distribution at MMU, Cheshire.

Content of pack

The pack contained a number of handouts and flyers, ranging from study skills materials to student finance and budgeting. Also flyers from student support services within MMU and from external organisations, of interest to mature students, were included. The benefits of producing a pack, rather than a booklet format, have meant that information could be easily up-dated and new materials added when appropriate.

Distribution of the packs

As a result of the initial circulation to staff, many departments ordered quantities of the packs for distribution to new students. Whilst ideally these packs were timed so as to be used as a pre-entry resource pack, some departments issued them up to and during the student induction period. The large quantities that were requested by departments had implications, for staff time, in relation to liaison, tracking and compilation of the packs. Student helpers were employed to assist in the collation of the packs. One of the problems which arose was obtaining supplies of leaflets which were included in the pack, as many support services within MMU only produce a limited run of leaflets for the academic year. Also new versions of leaflets are rarely available until the start of the following new academic year. This had implications for providing comprehensive and up to date versions of the pack for new students. A total of 2,227 Postgraduate Student Information Packs were distributed.

Although obtaining supplies of leaflets generally proved difficult, there were instances of effective collaboration and development of good practice. One example has been with the MMU Library. Through liaison with library staff, information regarding 'InfoSkills' (researching information) and accessing library information was made available for the packs and was further developed to provide students with more comprehensive information in relation to library support.

Student feedback

Evaluation forms with a pre-paid envelope were included in every pack distributed to students in order to analyse the usefulness of the information and to further develop the packs (**Appendix P**). Also, evaluation forms were sent to colleagues who had requested packs in departments at MMU. In response to being asked to rate materials in the pack, most students rated them as good or average. Those considered most useful by students included the 'Study Guide' (produced by Learning Support), the 'Critical Reading, Thinking and Writing' handout (TIPS) and 'Writing a Critical Review' (University of New South Wales). Developing critical skills featured largely as useful in student feedback. Comments included:

'All information on writing a critical review, critical reading, thinking as they are essential skills for a better understanding when doing research.'

'Specific guides on study skills for different types of assignments may come in use later.'

In relation to identifying what other information students would want included in the pack, two wanted general information to be included about Manchester, four students wanted information on the Student Union and Sport and three wanted information about accommodation. Whilst information was included in later packs on the Student Union and Sport, earlier versions did not have this, as the new booklets were not in print at that time.

When asked if any information was irrelevant, some commented that as they had already been studying at postgraduate level, some information was of no use to them, nevertheless it was recognised that it would be useful for people who had been out of education for a while. Comments concerning how the pack could be improved included:

'Lots of useful stuff, perhaps send prior to starting the course i.e. fees advice and budgeting useful to have sooner, rather than later.'

'Generally useful and helped me to be proactive at the start.'

'Perhaps combining the guides on critical reading and literature reviews into one useful study guide would make it easier to understand.'

Student feedback highlighted the drawbacks in producing a generic pack for distribution to all postgraduate students, as not all information is necessarily appropriate. The timing of receipt of information is an issue which requires consideration. Student evaluation illustrates the need for packs to be tailored in relation to their content and distribution. Some departments did request packs with certain handouts removed. For example those distributed to Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students had the 'Cost of Postgraduate Study' leaflet omitted as students studying a (PGCE) are entitled to a bursary.

Conclusion

It has been identified through liaison with lecturing and support staff at MMU, that information which assists in student orientation is a useful and much needed resource for postgraduate students. Student feedback has highlighted the need for both study skills materials and general orientation information regarding living and studying in Manchester, in particular.

FAQ

A Frequently Asked Questions booklet (10,000) was developed to guide new students joining the University in September 2004 and was a response to student queries drawn from a mapping of pastoral interactions from the previous academic year as well as discussions with support staff about addressing induction procedures. These and many other related paper based materials have formed part of the TIPS embedding strategy accompanied by an on-line resource centre for students who are now able to download all TIPS materials; generating a legacy of the TIPS Project www.mmu.ac.uk/tips (launched December 2004, 15,000 visits in first six months).

Dissemination Phase

TIPS on Tour – December 2003

These staff development workshops (**Appendix H**) were delivered during December 2003 and January 2004 across the University in order to give an update on the progress of the project and in order to raise the profile of TIPS to staff within departments. A 'TIPS on Tour Literature Pack' was disseminated which included TIPS publicity, a TIPS Student Menu of available support and other TIPS materials, as well as an overview of the pre-entry events which had taken place in September 2003. This was very beneficial as staff attending these staff awareness raising sessions, booked the TIPS team to work with their students at Course level, resulting in large groups of students being supported at one time.

TIPS Symposium – December 2004

The TIPS end of project Symposium was held on 2 December 2004 where initial project findings were disseminated to practitioners who demonstrated an interest in student retention research through attendance. This was promoted through electronic invitation publicity being posted on the MMU website as well as Aimhigher Greater Manchester, HE Academy and Action on Access websites. All project stakeholders were sent paper based invitation flyers. Speakers centred their presentations around how they, as practitioners and TIPS, have collaborated in order to reach more students collectively and effectively. (**Appendix V**). The event also gave students the opportunity to relay their stories regarding their own personal benefits resulting from TIPS support. The TIPS website was launched and four laptops with wireless web access were made available for delegates to explore www.mmu.ac.uk/tips, www.headstart4U.net and www.college4us.co.uk which were all referred to by different presenters throughout the day. Each delegate also received a paper-based version 'goody bag' containing copies of all materials which the TIPS team had developed. The event was recorded in both video and DVD formats.

Prior to the hosting the TIPS end of project Symposium, the TIPS team disseminated the findings from this work in presentation format and delivered papers at several conferences, developing the following track record:

- *'TIPS In Collaboration With Headstart – A Case Study'*. Aimhigher Launch Event. UMIST, Manchester, March (2004)
- *'TIPS For 'Non-Traditional Students' 'Greater Manchester Impartial Pre-entry Advice and Guidance Dissemination Event'*. MMSU, Manchester, May (2004)
- *'Support For Learning & Student Diversity'*. Presented at the 3rd Annual L & T Conference. Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education-MMU, Manchester, May (2004)
- *'Budgeting And Finance For Non-Traditional Students'*, Presented at 'A Holistic Approach To Student Support'. UCLAN, Lancashire, June, (2004)
- *'Degrees Of Uncertainty Or TIPS For Success?'*. Presented at 'Student Wellbeing In the 21st Century'. Glasgow, August (2004)
- *'Degrees of Uncertainty or TIPS for Success? Oiling The Wheel Rather Than Re-inventing It'*. Presented at L & T Conference'. MMU, Cheshire, September (2004) (Published in Learning and Teaching In Action, MMU. Vol.3 Issue 3. December 2004)
- *'Degrees Of Uncertainty Or TIPS For Success? A Narrow Look At Wider Issues'*. Presented at 'Challenging Inequalities: What Can Community Psychologists Do?' UK Community Psychology Conference, Exeter, October, (2004)
- *'Transition, Induction and Progression Strategies.'* Presented at TIPS End of Project Symposium. Manchester, December, (2004)
- *'A New Look At 'Old' Issues. Responding To Needs Of Mature Students In Higher Education'*. Presented at TIPS End of Project Symposium. Manchester, December, (2004)



4.6: Analysis and Key Findings

During the course of the academic year, 2003/04, TIPS, as a service, supported and tracked 861 students. Data was captured and then entered on a database. Out of the 861 students tracked, 273 were 2003 applicants from target institutions who booked and/or attended the two pre-entry events held in September 2003. The other 588 students who were tracked, were supported on-course at MMU during 2003/04. These students either received one-to-one support (total of 164 sessions delivered) and/or attended a TIPS workshop (55 student workshops delivered).

A further 531 students expecting to enter HE in 2004, were supported in the post-16 institutions using the H.U.G. model, but we were unable to track these students due to issues surrounding Data Protection (**Appendix H**).

Mapping by Target LEA

Whilst analysing the retention rates of tracked students (n=861), several levels of scrutiny were employed. This was carried out in order to evaluate the effectiveness of using databases to profile the information of 'at risk' student groups. The most accurate profiling method to analyse students withdrawal rates in Greater Manchester and South Cheshire was by examining student records and mapping supported student's by target LEA's. This data was broken down further by gender, in order to elucidate any trends.

Retention of Students Supported by Target LEA (n=382 Greater Manchester, n=100 South Cheshire)

Manchester	Female	Male	Total	Retention Pre-entry Stage 2003	Retention Post-entry Stage 2003
Live (L)	100	44	144	83%	97%
Cancelled (X)	16	12	28		
Withdrawn (W)	2	2	4		
Total	118	58	176		
Wigan	Female	Male	Total		
L	4	3	7	87.5%	100%
X	1	0	1		
Total	5	3	8		
Stockport	Female	Male	Total		
L	33	14	47	82.5%	94%
X	4	3	7		
W	2	1	3		
Total	39	18	57		
Oldham	Female	Male	Total		
L	14	5	19	100%	100%
Total	14	5	19		
Salford	Female	Male	Total		
L	6	8	14	87.5%	100%
X	0	2	2		
Total	6	10	16		
Rochdale	Female	Male	Total		
L	12	7	19	90.5%	100%
X	2	0	2		
Total	14	7	21		
Trafford	Female	Male	Total		
L	25	12	37	92%	97%
X	2	0	2		
W	1	0	1		
Total	28	12	40		
Bury	Female	Male	Total		
L	12	6	18	90%	100%
X	0	2	2		
Total	12	8	20		
Bolton	Female	Male	Total		
L	4	6	10	75%	100%
X	0	2	2		
Total	4	8	12		
Tameside	Female	Male	Total		
L	9	2	11	85%	85%
W	0	2	2		
Total	9	4	13		
Stoke on Trent	Female	Male	Total		
L	3	0	3	60%	75%
W	1	0	1		
X	1	0	1		
Total	5	0	5		
Staffordshire	Female	Male	Total		
L	5	4	9	75%	100%
X	1	2	3		
Total	6	6	12		
Cheshire	Female	Male	Total		
L	51	23	74	89%	95%
W	2	2	4		
X	4	1	5		
Total	57	26	83		



Mapping by Gender

Out of the 861 students who were supported by TIPS, 482 students (56%) were identified as being from the 13 target LEA's which indicated that 44% (379) of the students supported were from non-target LEA's. Out of the total 482 students supported from target LEA's, 317 were females (66%) and 165 were males (34%) indicating that nearly twice as many target females than target males accessed the TIPS service.

Calculating Retention

Retention was explored at two different stages; from pre-entry stage and from post-entry stage. Status of tracked students was checked against the student records system in October 2003 and again in October 2004. Pre-entry stage retention percentages were calculated and included all students, whether, live, cancelled or withdrawn. At post-entry stage, statistics were generated from students who had either live or withdrawn status but cancelled status was excluded as this identified that those students who had cancelled, had applied to MMU via UCAS but had never taken up their place. From these deductions, withdrawal rates at both pre-entry and post-entry stages could be calculated. As last year's post-entry retention rate for young entrants at MMU was 89% (2003/04) and the task of this project was to facilitate the retention of target groups up to the same benchmark as young entrants, TIPS has demonstrated that the post-entry retention of tracked students from target groups, when mapped by their LEA, averages at 96%, exceeding, rather than matching the retention benchmark of young entrants. As retention of young entrants has remained stagnant to the previous year during 2003/04, TIPS can be seen to have made a valid contribution to the retention of 'at risk' students at MMU.

Mapping by Target Post-16 Institutions

As target post-16 institutions had already been identified (**Appendix A**), TIPS attempted to map students by their previous place of study. Although to some extent, this profiled students by their previous institution, 164 of the 861 students that TIPS supported did not have this information available on their student record. From this, it was deducted that mapping students by their previous place of study was too inaccurate to bear any fruit about retention. If all student records captured this information, this would have demonstrated an interesting profile for post-16 staff regarding the progression of students who had previously attended their institution.

Totals Supported by Target Post-16 Institutions 2003 Entry (164 not stated)

Target Institution	Total Supported	Live	Retention
City College Manchester	28	25	89%
Xaverian	17	15	88%
MANCAT	31	26	84%
NorthTrafford College	7	4	57%
SouthTrafford College	14	13	93%
Bolton Community College	6	3	50%
Aquinas College	13	13	100%
Burnley College	9	9	100%
Bury College	22	19	86%
Hopwood Hall	10	8	80%
South Cheshire	18	16	89%
Whalley Range	5	4	80%
Ridge Danyers	39	32	82%
Oldham College	15	14	93%
Parrswood 6th Form	6	5	83%
Stoke-on-trent	7	6	86%
Holy Cross	1	1	100%
Wigan & Leigh	8	7	87.5%
Loreto College	18	15	83%
Salford	1	1	100%
Stockport	20	14	70%
Tameside	12	8	67%
North Area College	7	4	57%
Total from target colleges	314	262	83.5%

Mapping by Ethnic Origin

Access database tracking of students supported at pre-entry stage 2003 and post-entry stage during 2003/04 included a mapping of ethnic origin. Whilst this was useful in order to eyeball which specific black and minority ethnic groups accessed TIPS support in high numbers, nearly 7% (n=60) of the total group refused to disclose their ethnic origin and a further 6% (n=49) were declared as ‘not known’ as this information was unavailable from the student records system. This highlights why drawing on such data can be so problematic. One salient feature which arose from this mapping of ethnic origin was that nearly 52% of the 861 students tracked from 2003 entry were White British. The only other salient (more than 5%) feature of mapping students who accessed TIPS by their ethnic origin, was that it identified Chinese students (n=80) and Asian British Pakistani students (n=58) as the second and third largest groups.

Ethnic Origin	Total	%
Asian British Bangladeshi	10	1.2
Asian British Indian	28	3.3
Asian British Pakistani	80	9.3
Arab	1	0.1
Black British	2	0.2
Black British African	25	2.9
Black British Caribbean	23	2.7
Chinese	58	6.7
Indonesian	1	0.1
Information Refused	60	6.9
Malaysian	3	0.3
Mixed White Asian	5	0.6
Mixed White Black	1	0.1
Mixed White Black Asian	3	0.3
Mixed White Black African	2	0.2
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	3	0.3
Nigerian	2	0.2
Not Known	49	5.6
Other Asian Background	13	1.5
Other Black Background	7	0.8
Other Ethic Background	9	1.0
Other Mixed Background	5	0.6
Other White Background	12	1.4
White British	445	51.7
White Irish	14	1.6
Total	861	

4.6a: Obstacles to Student Well-being: Contributing Factors

Themes were drawn from the case study analyses of one-to-one sessions, thematic analyses of the TIPS Overall Service Questionnaires (Appendix T) and all TIPS workshop evaluation forms, highlighting how interpretations and trends have been gleaned from qualitative as well as quantitative data. From this examination, several key themes were identified by students as obstacles which contributed to their sense of student wellbeing in higher education.

- Accessibility of support
- Institutional culture-‘not fitting in’
- Staff and student interaction
- Lack of confidence
- Financial hardship
- The learning environment
- Work and family-external pressures and commitments

Case studies

The data collected in the form of case notes identified and provided a detailed account of the type of issues and problems students presented and outlined the advisers’ actions in relation to each student case. Over the academic year, TIPS delivered 164 one-to-one sessions to 91 different students. Analysis of a selection of the one-to-one sessions highlighted a number of salient issues and added volume to the voices of students from the target groups which may have implications for further development of student support services across the education sector.

Institutional habitus – a case of not ‘fitting in’

Using a theoretical framework in order to understand why some students have problems coping with higher education, allows us to explore institutional practices from a critical perspective. Within education it is argued that a form of institutional habitus exists whereby educational institutions favour knowledge and experience of dominant social groups to the detriment of other groups. Habitus is a term used by Bourdieu (1977) to refer to the norms and practices of particular social classes or groups.

Liz Thomas states that,

‘In relation to student retention in HE the notions of habitus and institutional habitus appear to be useful tools. If a student feels that they do not fit in, that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is undervalued, they may be more inclined to withdraw early.’ (2002:431).

This framework proves useful in understanding the alienation students can feel and the mechanisms which engender this. Using the idea of habitus as a theoretical framework with which to reflect on individual case studies, highlights examples of institutional practice and opens up the debate surrounding the need for institutional change. This is particularly relevant in the cases of Reha and Salma (alias names have been substituted for original names in all case studies).

Reha and Salma – An Intoxication of Culture?

During the first term of the academic year, two first year students came to TIPS for study skills advice. Both these students were young Asian females and were studying a degree in Social Sciences. They were finding it quite difficult to cope with the demands of academic study at university, but this was compounded by an assignment that they had been set. The assignment was to write a critical review of a journal article they had been given. The subject matter of the journal was ‘pub’ and

'club' culture. The students, Reha and Salma, disclosed that they found the subject matter very difficult as neither of them had ever been in a 'pub' or 'club', as both of them were Muslim. Neither of them had ever consumed alcohol. On reading some of the article, it could be argued that it assumed a tacit knowledge of 'pubs' and 'clubs'.

As Thomas states,

'A traditional institutional habitus assumes that the habitus of the dominant group (i.e. white, male, middle class and able bodied) is not only the correct habitus, but treats all students as if they possessed it, and this is reflected in teaching, learning and assessment strategies' (2002:433).

Reha and Salma did not possess this 'traditional institutional habitus' and besides engendering feelings of not being able to cope with academic study, it also reinforced feelings of not 'fitting in.'

In order for these students to be able to tackle this assignment, in a study skills session, we discussed using their cultural position as a starting point from which to build criticism of the article, thereby turning a negative experience into a positive, critical one. Fortunately, they did have each other for support and for validation of their own life experiences. Nevertheless, it can be argued that in setting assignments such as this, it engenders both cultural and academic exclusion for students. Although degree level students often have to grapple with material which is unfamiliar and new to them, using this type of subject matter in the first term of a degree course is questionable. This is especially so when examining practice using institutional habitus as a framework for understanding the transmission of dominant social norms.

Zea – 'I don't know what these words mean.'

Whilst Reha and Salma had each other for support, feelings of cultural difference are compounded when faced with academic exclusion and lack of support. Zea is a mature Iranian student and English is her second language. Zea accessed TIPS support at a crisis point during the first year of her degree, feeling on the point of having a nervous break down and having lost 6 kilos in weight. Not only had she got no recent experience of studying, she was also juggling work and family commitments. Zea disclosed that she felt alienated on her course as most other students on her course were only 18 or 19 years old. Also she had been told by another student that she should not have enrolled at university until she was better at English. This had undermined her confidence further.

McGivney makes the point that,

'Any student of whatever age who feels isolated, lonely, and out of place and who does not develop a sense of 'belonging' to the learning community is at risk of leaving the course in the early stages' (2003:113).

Zea came to TIPS with no sense of belonging within the university context. Not only did Zea feel that she did not belong at university, she had been given a number of handouts by her tutor which she could not understand. The handouts were written in a dense academic style and as a result, Zea spent a lot of time looking up various words in a dictionary, trying to understand their content. Zea's experiences raise a number of issues in relation to isolation and the use of academic language. The TIPS teams' experience of advising students over one academic year highlighted the need for academic sensitivity regarding curriculum design, in terms of content and use of academic jargon.

Macdonald and Stratta's comment that a diverse student population has implications for learning and teaching policies highlights that change does need to occur if we are to facilitate learning for all those who enter university (2001:250). Set within the framework of concerns over 'dumbing down' of academic standards, which has become a dominant discourse in the arena of education, implementing changes to facilitate the learning of students, such as Zea, occupies a tenuous position.

In reality, the support given by TIPS over the course of the academic year was minimal, with Zea accessing study skills support five times. Yet through accessing TIPS support, Zea gained confidence in her own abilities and began to feel a 'sense of belonging.' Her marks improved significantly and she gained 72% for one assignment and 60% for another in a subject which she found difficult. Zea is now in the second year of her degree course but can no longer receive TIPS support due to the project ending in December 2004. She is, however receiving continuing support from a member of the TIPS team who has since been appointed as an additional member of staff within the Learning Support Unit at MMU.

Accessibility and Timely Support

Having access to support when it is required can be considered an issue which impacts on retention and student wellbeing. There are implications for universities regarding the organisational arrangements and working practises of staff. As Leathwood and O'Connell point out,

'...universities themselves need to consider the type and level of support they offer to their students, the extent to which their organizational arrangements and academic cultures are exclusionary, and the ways in which they might need to change to better meet the needs of a diverse student body' (2003:612).

The following two case studies raise issues regarding accessibility and flexibility of support within the university environment.

Daniel

Within universities, support services tend to be open only during 'normal' office hours. Yet, some students need to access support outside these times due to other commitments. Daniel, a mature student undertaking a Postgraduate Certificate in Education was one such student. He was juggling family life, work and study and as he was on a teaching placement he could not get in to see someone for support during the day. TIPS offered him an appointment after the end of the normal working day, so that he could access support. At the time he was at the critical point of remediation and in danger of not being able to continue with his course. A follow up telephone conversation with Daniel, by a member of the TIPS team, revealed that as a result of receiving support, Daniel survived remediation and successfully continued on his course.

Jo

Support services often only offer students fixed appointment times, yet students sometime present in situations of crisis and at times when staff are not always available. One such student was Jo, who on the last day of term came for advice, as she was about to be made homeless due to having to move out of university halls accommodation. As a care leaver, she had no family support. She wanted help with completing a Hardship Loan and Hardship Fund application but as it was the 'deadline' day for both, there was urgency to ensure it was completed and submitted. Applications to such funds require students to submit copies of forms from their LEA and the Student Loan Company. Jo had not got these forms with her and had no money for public transport to go and get them from her halls accommodation. A TIPS adviser rescheduled her tasks for the day and spent the time necessary to assist Jo in the completion of all the relevant forms



as well as liaising with charity organisations and other support services to further advise Jo on her personal circumstances.

Both these examples raise issues relating to organisational practice. Because TIPS operated a student centred approach to support and was not confined by rigid working practices, students such as Daniel and Jo could access the support they required at a time when it was crucial for them to receive it. Operating a flexible system of support does have implications for staffing but if, as an institution, we are serious about retention and progression for students who enter higher education, then the scrutiny of working practices and organisational arrangements does require further examination.

Relational Interaction in Supporting Students

Cleo

Supporting students who have little confidence of their own abilities requires more than just the formula to plan and write assignments and Cleo's story hinges on low levels of confidence as a barrier to retention and progression. We would argue that a relational approach which acknowledges the individuals fears and concerns is paramount. Cleo is one such student who has benefited from the development of a relational approach with the adviser. As a mature student, studying on a part-time basis, she

had no allocated Personal Tutor within her department and being out of education for a number of years, found the idea of writing essays difficult. As a result, she put off getting started on assignments, although she did collate notes and did background research. Cleo suffers from depression which also impacted on her studies and she questioned whether she should be at university. In cases, such as this, it can be argued that confidence building is the key to assisting students to move forward and develop their academic skills.

As Thomas highlights,

'staff attitudes and their relationship with students is an important means by which social and academic distance can be minimised enabling students to feel valued and sufficiently confident to seek guidance when they require it'. (2002:439).

In order to explore how this relational interaction was developed, a flavour of the sessions is given. At the first session an examination of the ways Cleo could organise the material she had collected was the focus along with managing work, leisure and study strategies.

At this first session by sharing some experiences of university study, especially those of not being able to get started on assignments, we discussed methods to overcome this. At the end of the session we arranged a further appointment to go through

the draft of the essay, thereby providing a focus and momentum to get started on the essay itself. This enabled Cleo to move forward with the development of her essay. After the Christmas break, when Cleo had got the marks back for her essay she called in to relay her progress. Although she had got 64%, she was not happy with this. As practitioners, we do need to share the ups and downs with the students that we support, as this enhances a sense of belonging and 'fitting in' despite the difficulties which exist. At this point Cleo was uncertain about continuing into the second year. The tutor who marked her essay, had written comments in red pen all over it and this had clearly impacted on her feeling of it not being good enough, as she made a number of comments about it. Even a triviality, like writing in a red pen, may have connotations for the student which academic staff need to be aware of.

Cleo talked about her indecision about future options for the next academic year more than once and at a session in March this became the focus of her session with the TIPS adviser. On exploring her future career aspirations, Cleo identified that ideally she would like to lecture in English at degree level. In discussing the route to becoming a lecturer, again a relational approach was adopted which tapped into the advisers own experiences, providing a focus for further study and the steps to take to realise this ambition. Over the course of the academic year Cleo attended seven sessions, some of these were scheduled appointments but others were on a drop in basis to report on how she was progressing with her studies. This highlights the rapport that was built up between the student and the adviser. Over the year, discussion focussed on a number of issues besides study skills; these were issues relating to confidence, depression, especially the fears of ending long term Counselling and exploring other sources of possible support.

Cleo completed an evaluation form of the TIPS service and commented that the encouragement had been very important to her. Asked about how useful the TIPS advice and guidance had been, she commented,

'Extremely useful and invaluable as being a part-time student I don't have a personal tutor. Fantastic source of support and practical advice and criticism about my written work which has been really appreciated and reaped excellent results for end of year assessment grades 70% plus.'

It can be argued that support needs to be more than just purely concerned with retention but also about facilitating the fulfilment of potential and increasing future options for students. It can be argued that the practical aspects of getting started on writing an essay cannot be divorced from the emotional feelings which this engenders. Feelings of 'not being good enough' and 'a failure' are just as big a barrier as not knowing the practical aspects of writing essays. A holistic approach to supporting students recognises that progression in higher education does not rest solely on academic ability but negotiating and coping with the day to day issues which can affect students' lives.

Farah

Whilst developing a relational approach with students can be beneficial, it can also be problematic and raises issues for the adviser. Farah is a student on the second year of a degree in Applied Social Studies, having transferred from another university for her second year. Initially, Farah was referred to TIPS for help with the completion of a Hardship Loan form. After discussion it became apparent that she was dealing with a raft of issues in her life. Her main concerns related to being in debt, concerns over her mother's mental health, her own dyslexia and coping with academic study. Farah's mother does not live in Manchester, which means she has to travel a significant distance to see her

on a regular basis. She also has to liaise with her mother's Social Worker and other health care professionals. Farah socialises with a group of friends, who are not studying and tend to frequently go out 'partying'. Farah smokes cannabis on a daily basis and also takes class 'A' drugs, such as Ecstasy. Because of financial hardship she often contemplates leaving university and securing full time employment.

During the course of the academic year, a TIPS adviser endeavoured to support her through her difficulties by providing both practical and emotional support. Often, Farah would turn up wanting support without any pre-arranged appointment. In terms of support, Farah came to TIPS with a raft of issues, yet for the adviser, cases such as these raise a number of issues. There is a fine line between support and dependency in terms of supporting students in crisis. As advisers, we are sometimes not equipped to deal with certain issues, yet if the student is reluctant to access other support services where do we draw the line? Advisers require a forum and mechanisms in place to discuss difficult cases which present themselves in the course of supporting students. In this way advisers can share good practice and expertise.

4.6b: Initial Findings and Recommendations

- Pre-entry guidance needs to generate skills which increase 'preparedness' for HE study
- Support needs to be responsive, timely and readily available
- Study Skills/IT/Library/ Financial literacy is key to success in HE
- New mature/postgraduate students need targeted centralised support and faculty-based support as well as accompanying pastoral resource materials
- English for academic studies needs a closer focus. Home students for whom English is a second language and academia is viewed as 'a third language' need more centralised/faculty based targeted support and accompanying resource materials in order to increase the student progression and achievement of this group
- Predominately females have accessed the one-to-one service
- Twice the amount of females than males have been supported by TIPS from targeted groups (analysed by target LEA) and other methods to target males needs further consideration

4.6c: Further Findings and Recommendations

- Data protection is a barrier to this collective approach to partnership working
- Wider retention and progression statistics dissemination needs to be more timely and easily accessible
- More action research in this area over longer periods of time (longitudinal studies) could help to 'unpack' the intricate nature of collaborative and 'holistic' practice
- New learning and teaching communities are always emerging and so research needs to be 'grounded' in their own contexts of historical change

5: Discussion

This research aimed to show how a democratic, multi-method approach to data collection can produce a fruitful base to building on our understanding of relationships which facilitate student support. It also aimed to demonstrate the benefits of using a multidisciplinary, inter-professional and inter-agency focus. There is a need to work from a project perspective and propose a way of thinking about combining research and practice which practitioners might want to take forward.

TIPS, during one academic year (2003/4), has offered and mapped support strategies for students who are at different stages of their personal journey towards achieving a 'certificate of cultural competence' (Bourdieu, 1986). Whilst this could be considered as taking positive steps towards shaping democratic and representative pathways into the labour market for diverse communities, the intention adhered to was to maintain reflexivity and responsiveness to student support.

'...universities themselves need to consider the type and level of support they offer to their students, the extent to which their organizational arrangements and academic cultures are exclusionary, and the ways in which they might need to change to better meet the needs of a diverse student body.' (Leathwood and O'Connell: 2003:612)

As a direct result of the TIPS retention research project, not only has the institution recognised the need for an additional central post in Learning Support, there will also now be several additional Faculty Student Support Officers posts created so that there will be a TIPS 'type' of adviser in every faculty. In the long term, this should contribute to an overall improvement in retention across the institution.

An overarching aim of this research, was to stimulate debates around the negative and positive dialogue that such new 'positions' generate within wider society. Diverse communities within the education sector have already inherited age-old typologies that situate them in marginalised positions through discourse such as 'non-traditional', 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' students.

Bourdieu (1977) referred to 'institutional habitus' – educational institutions favour knowledge and experience of dominant social groups to the detriment of other groups.

'In relation to student retention in HE the notions of habitus and institutional habitus appear to be useful tools. If a student feels that they do not fit in, that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is undervalued, they may be more inclined to withdraw early.' (Thomas:2002, 431).

This appears to be in evidence through the work of TIPS, as a service. By valuing the position of each individual student, through listening to each student's individual situation, TIPS advisers both built rapport with students and entered into relationship with them over time. This, in turn, helped students to see what they were doing right as well as guiding them on issues where they needed support. This is evident in quotes from the TIPS overall service evaluation, student feedback:

TIPS staff were described as:

- *"Patient and gave me the relevant information I needed. Reassured me that I was not alone."*
- *"Very clearly spoken. Excellent advice and support offered for the future. Made you feel calm and at ease."*
- *"Made me more confident because she spoke positively and her tone of voice was reassuring."*
- *"Helpful, reassuring, sympathetic. Tuned into our needs."*
- *"Invaluable! I feel that I am not on my own and that there is support there for me if needed."*

Consumerist notions of a 'good university', as Read et al have pointed out, are increasingly defined by the profile of their student intake –

'so that those institutions that receive a large number of 'non-traditional' students are subsequently constructed as 'substandard' (2003 quoted in Leathwood and O'Connell).

This, it can be argued, acts to position so called 'non-traditional' students as a burden on universities in a number of ways. Often these students are pathologised and described as lacking in talent, not being interested in learning or not being able to cope with the rigours of academic study. Leathwood and O'Connell point out, drawing on the work of Reay (1997), that lack of aspiration and self esteem are located as individual problems or personality deficits, rather than constructed through poverty, social inequalities, racial and other forms of discrimination (2003:613). Therefore we would argue that it is important for us when debating 'student wellbeing' to take into account the disadvantages which exist at the structural level of society rather than locating the problem as being purely the fault of the individual student.

Liz Thomas has identified from empirical research that universities need:

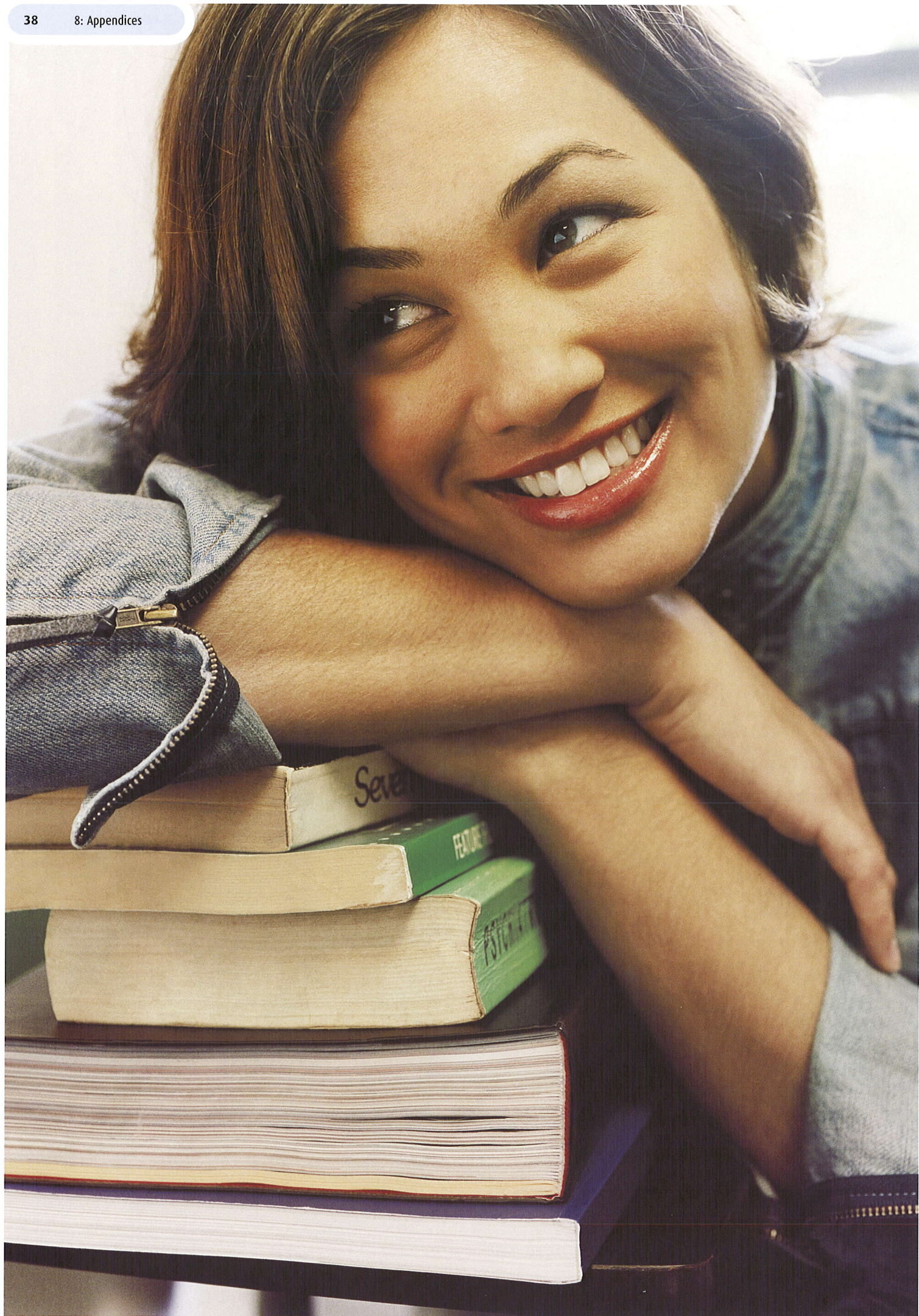
'inclusive teaching and learning strategies which do not assume that the habitus of 'traditional' HE students should be the habitus of new cohorts. This includes an awareness of different previous educational experiences, the language of instruction and implied requirements, alternative learning styles and needs and other assumed norms.' (2002:439).

6: Conclusion

As current debates on widening participation, student retention and success suggest, there is a need for further research and dissemination of inclusive models of good practice in this area. TIPS, acting as a practical think tank, demonstrated one example of how an institution has responded to current debates and as such offers practitioners useful insights and strategies for supporting diverse students.

As a result of utilising an 'Action Research' (Lewin, 1951) approach, TIPS, as a demand-led service, contributes to more than a distanced theoretical perspective but rather highlights findings that are based on direct practitioner experiences when working in the field of Student Support.





8: Appendices

Appendix A: List of Target Groups

Appendix B: Pre-entry 2003 Workshop Menu

Appendix C: Graphical Representation of TIPS Mapping of Student's Top 5 Pre-entry Choices 2003

Appendix D: Images of Pre-entry Events 2003

Appendix E: Pre-entry Day Feedback Form

Appendix F: Pre-entry Day Facilitator Feedback Form

Appendix G: Charts Mapping the Status of Applicants Who Confirmed To Attend Pre-entry Workshops

Appendix H: Database of Events

Appendix I: Student On-Course Menu

Appendix J: Case Recording Forms

Appendix K: Advice Sheet

Appendix L: Form of Authority

Appendix M: (i) Referral Form from TIPS
(ii) Referral Form to TIPS

Appendix N: Tracking of Mature Students Undergraduate and Postgraduate 2004 packs

Appendix O: Mature Students Pack Evaluation Form

Appendix P: Postgraduate Information Pack Evaluation Form

Appendix Q: Exam Workshop Evaluation Form

Appendix R: Finance and Budgeting Workshop Evaluation Form

Appendix S: CV and Covering Letter Workshop Evaluation Form

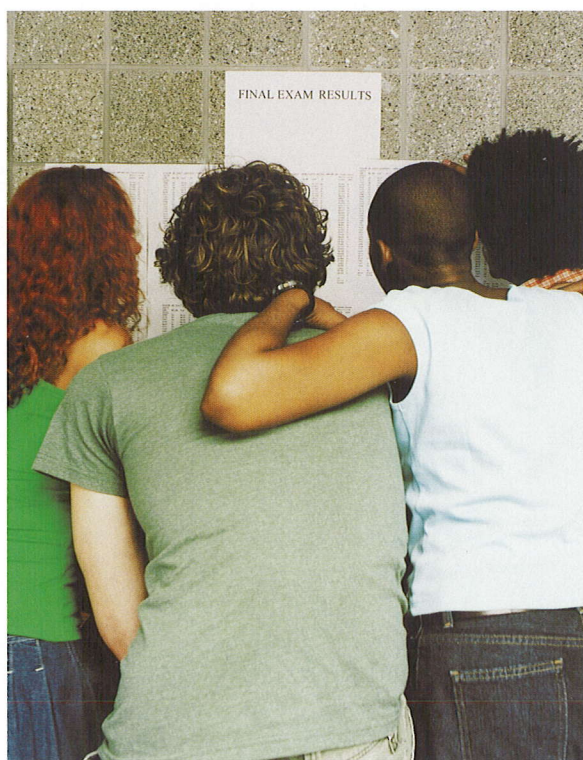
Appendix T: TIPS Overall Service Questionnaire

Appendix U: TIPS Symposium Programme

Appendix V: TIPS Symposium Transcribed Question and Answer Sessions

Appendix W: TIPS Symposium Evaluation Form

Appendix X: TIPS Symposium Collated Feedback



Appendix A – List of Target Groups

All MMU Foundation Year students who come through Clearing procedures.

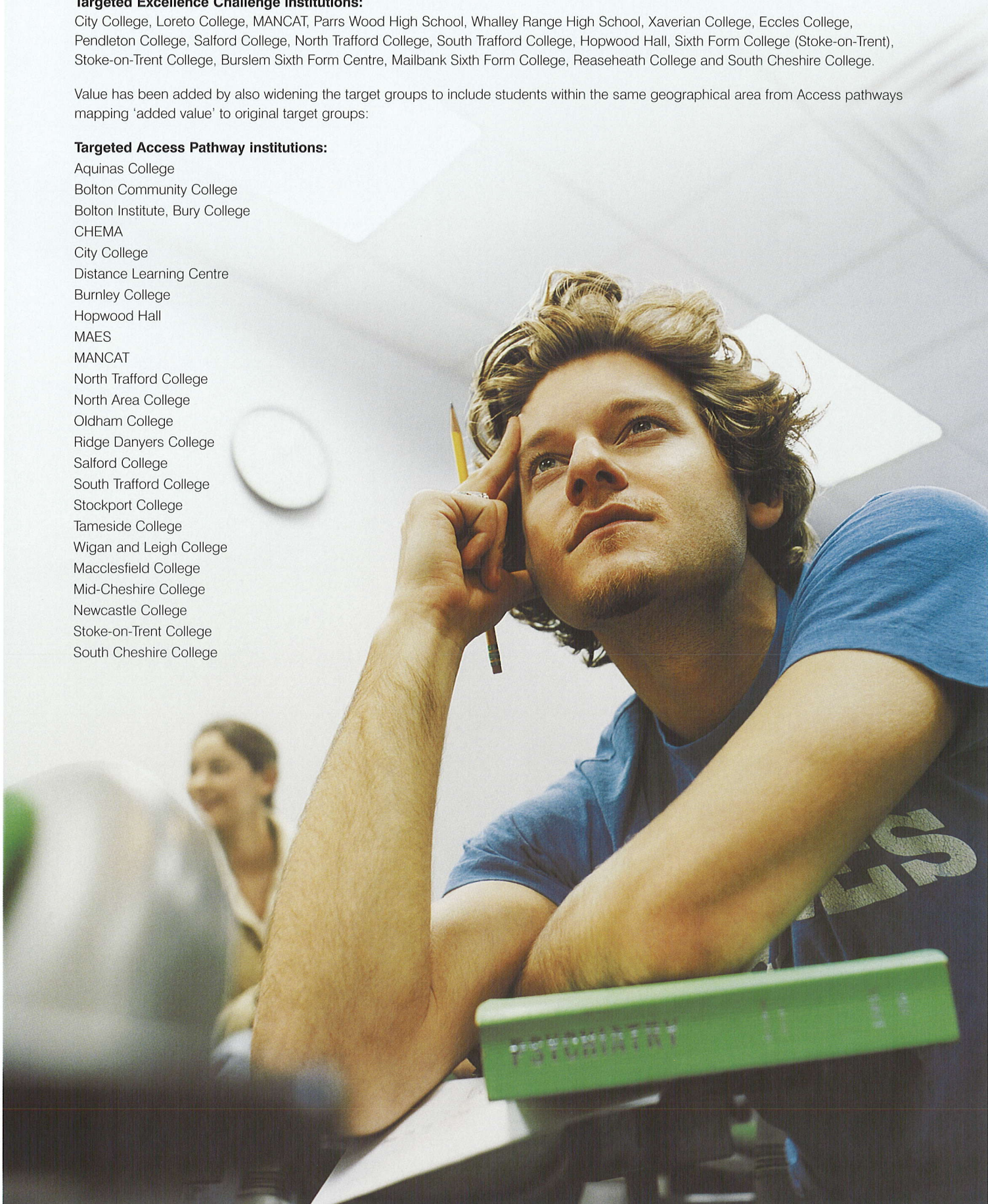
Targeted Excellence Challenge institutions:

City College, Loreto College, MANCAT, Parrs Wood High School, Whalley Range High School, Xaverian College, Eccles College, Pendleton College, Salford College, North Trafford College, South Trafford College, Hopwood Hall, Sixth Form College (Stoke-on-Trent), Stoke-on-Trent College, Burslem Sixth Form Centre, Mailbank Sixth Form College, Reaseheath College and South Cheshire College.

Value has been added by also widening the target groups to include students within the same geographical area from Access pathways mapping 'added value' to original target groups:

Targeted Access Pathway institutions:

Aquinas College
Bolton Community College
Bolton Institute, Bury College
CHEMA
City College
Distance Learning Centre
Burnley College
Hopwood Hall
MAES
MANCAT
North Trafford College
North Area College
Oldham College
Ridge Danyers College
Salford College
South Trafford College
Stockport College
Tameside College
Wigan and Leigh College
Macclesfield College
Mid-Cheshire College
Newcastle College
Stoke-on-Trent College
South Cheshire College



Appendix B – Pre-entry 2003 Total Workshop Menu Offered

Workshop Menu

Please mark your top 5 choices from the selection below

(note that the Foundation workshop is compulsory for Foundation Year students):

☐ **What you need to know about student finance**

This is an overview of the Student Loans system and the additional discretionary financial support schemes administered by the university. This workshop will outline what schemes are available, how they operate and your role in money management.

☐ **Making ends meet at university – top budgeting tips**

Although your student loan may seem a lot of money at first there are many things you will have to spend that money on such as, living costs, travel and books. This workshop will help you make the most of your cash and avoid any money worries in the future.

☐ **Preparation study skills for higher education**

One of the things that you won't have much of at University (apart from money!) is time. We will look at how you can get organised and manage your time effectively, along with other academic skills you'll need in order to hit the ground running.

☐ **Getting ahead through voluntary work**

Volunteering can enable you to learn new skills, meet new people, plan for a career and gain confidence. There are literally thousands of opportunities worthy of your time, so thinking about what volunteering you'd like to do in advance will enable you to choose the best opportunity and make the most of your experiences. This workshop will help you do just that! Check out opportunities for MMU students in advance at www.communi.mmu.ac.uk or email us for advice at communi@mmu.ac.uk

☐ **Kick-starting your career**

It's never too soon to develop your skills, plan a placement, organise work experience or research travel abroad...come along to get the ball rolling!

☐ **I'm a mature student let me in here!**

This workshop will explore any concerns that you may have about being a mature student at university. We will show you how best to prepare for university whilst juggling family and work commitments.

☐ **Identifying your learning style**

This workshop is designed to help you identify your own learning style, strengths and weaknesses and the ways in which you learn best. It will also provide you with information to support your learning.

☐ **It's your Students' Union**

Want to leave university with more than a degree? Come and see what opportunities the Student Union can offer you. From becoming an elected Student Representative and helping run the Union, to joining a Sports Club or a Society, we offer many types of opportunity to enhance your social and educational experience while here at MMU. Need a job? We offer various types of work to casual student staff throughout the year. Many of our activities offer MMSU training and accreditation, making it twice as valuable to you our members. Come along to our workshop and see what your Union can do for you. MMSU is dedicated to providing these services within an equal opportunities environment and a safe social space for all our students.

☐ **How the Student Advice Centre can help**

The Students Union runs an Advice Centre to help students with all kinds of issues that may arise during their studies. Find out how the Advice Centre can help and pick up their top ten survival tips.

☐ **All you need to know about the Foundation Year**

Get off to a great start, getting important information, all your questions answered, and a chance to meet fellow students.

☐ **Library information**

A key component of your academic life, learn about what the library has to offer you and how to access useful information.

☐ **Campus tour**

A guided tour of the University by Student Ambassadors. They will show you the key services and facilities which are available to students.

☐ **Sports facilities tour**

Keep yourself fit with the facilities and activities available on campus.

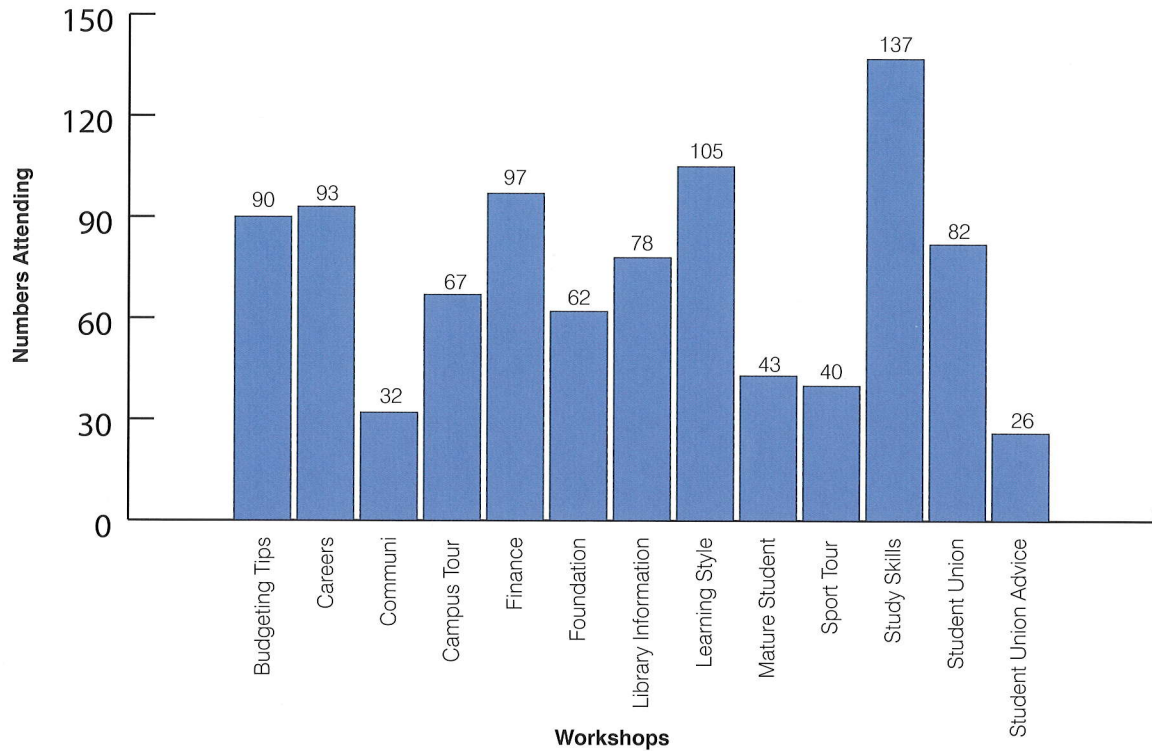
☐ **An overview of student accommodation (Alsager only)**

Those of you leaving home for the first time may be looking forward to this with a mixture of excitement and sometimes trepidation. Some of the questions we will explore are:

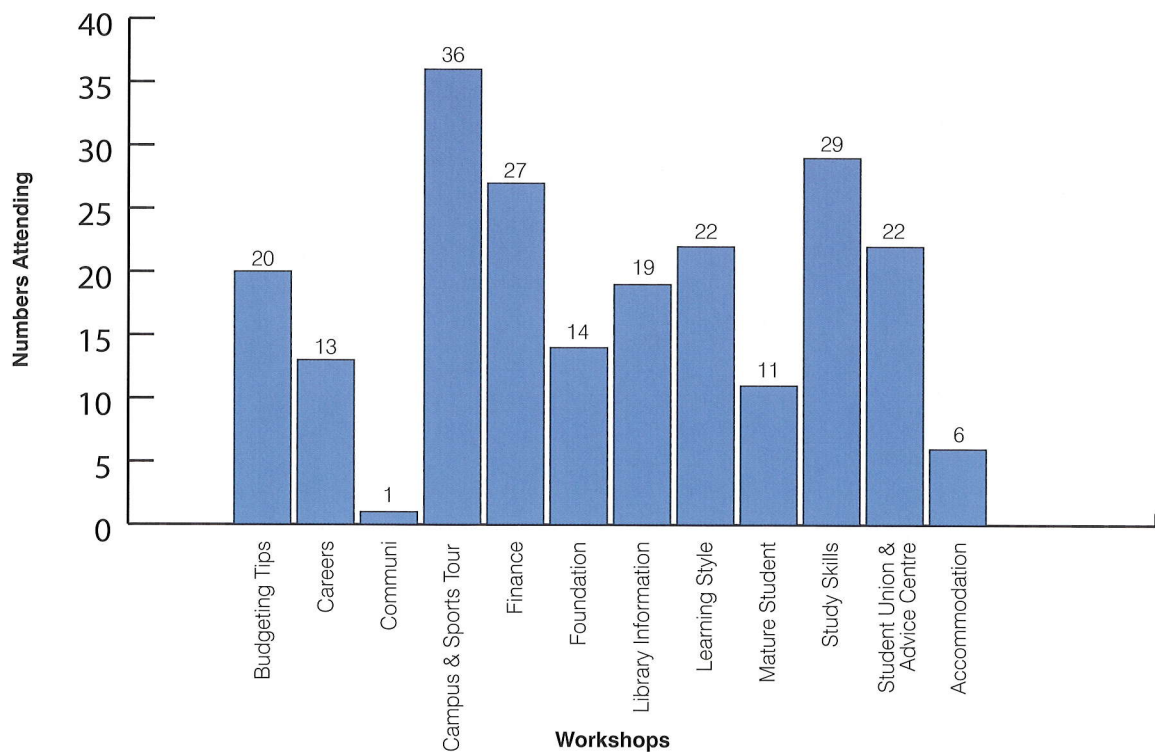
- What sort of accommodation do I want?
- Is this available?
- Can I afford it?
- Who do I live with and what do I do if I don't like them?

Appendix C – Graphs Mapping Student's Top 5 Pre-entry 2003 Workshop Choices

Total Numbers attending each workshop TIPS Pre-Entry Event – MMU Manchester 2003



Total Numbers attending each workshop TIPS Pre-Entry Event – MMU Cheshire 2003



Appendix D – Images Of Pre-entry Events 2003



Appendix E – Pre-entry Day Feedback Form

1. Please rate the following aspects of the day (Please tick):

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	N/A
Written information received about the day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration & Welcome	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What you need to know about Student Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making ends meet at University	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparation study skills for Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting ahead through voluntary work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kick-starting your career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An overview of student accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm a mature student let me in here!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying your Learning Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It's your Students' Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Students' Union Advice Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All you need to know about the Foundation Year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Library Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Campus Tour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports Facilities Tour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question & Answer Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Which aspects of the day did you find most useful?

3. What was your main reason for attending?

4. Were there any aspects of the day that you did not find useful?

5. If you have rated any of the above as Poor or Very Poor could you briefly state why?

6. Were there any aspects of the Pre-entry Day that you would change?

7. Any other comments?

Appendix F – Pre-entry Day Facilitator Feedback Form

Please tick one

☐

All Saints

☐

Alsager

What were your roles during the day?

How do you think the event went?

What were the FAQs and key issues arising from the day?

Your comments and recommendations.

Name:

Date:

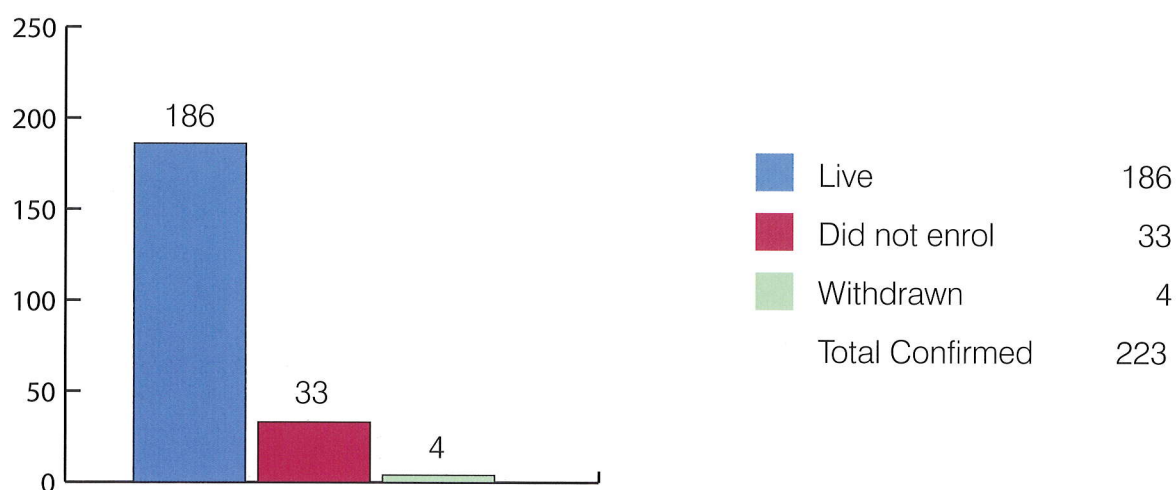
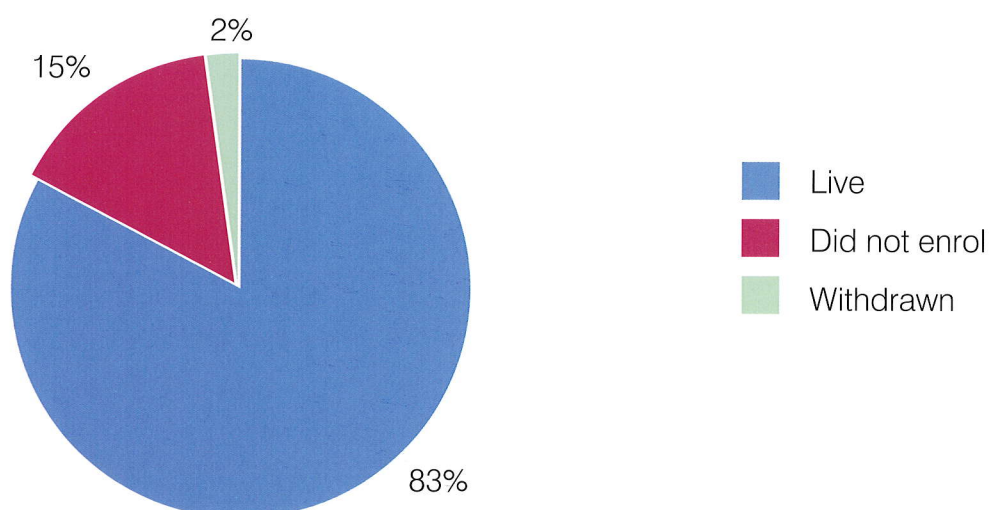
Position:

Appendix G – Charts Mapping Status of Applicants Who Confirmed To Attend Pre-entry Workshops

Live	186
Did not enrol	33
Withdrawn	4

Total Confirmed 223

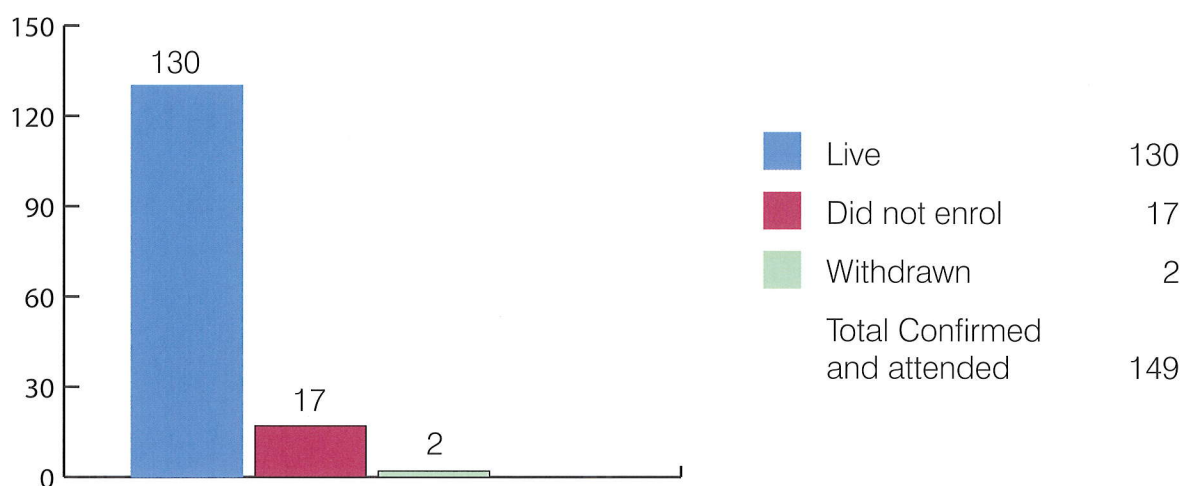
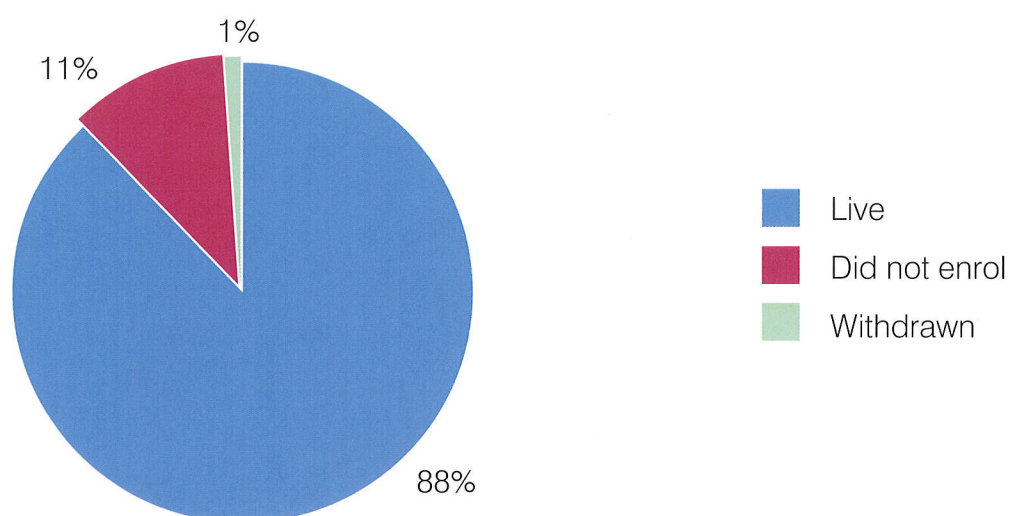
Pre-entry Workshops



Live	130
Did not enrol	17
Withdrawn	2

**Total Confirmed
and attended** **149**

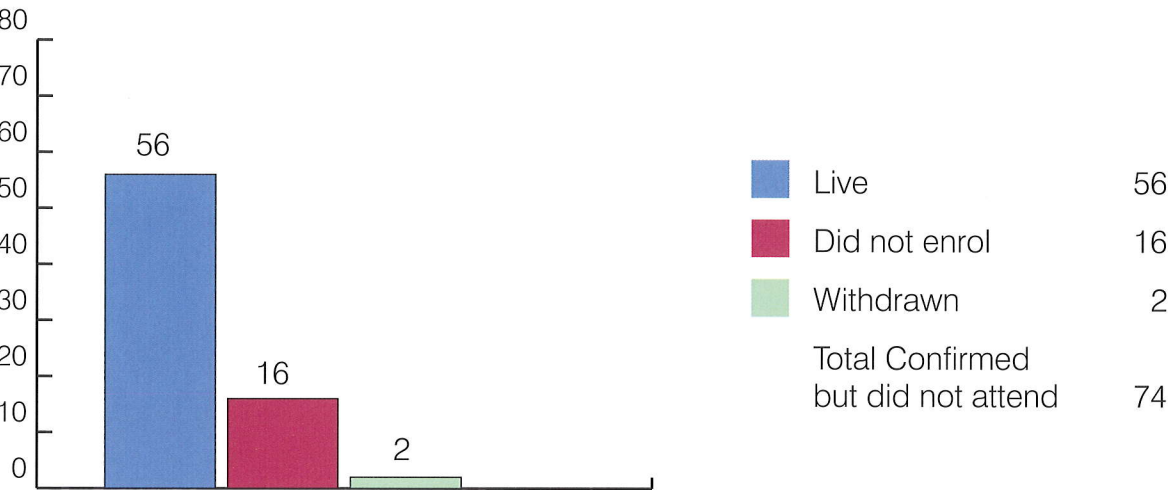
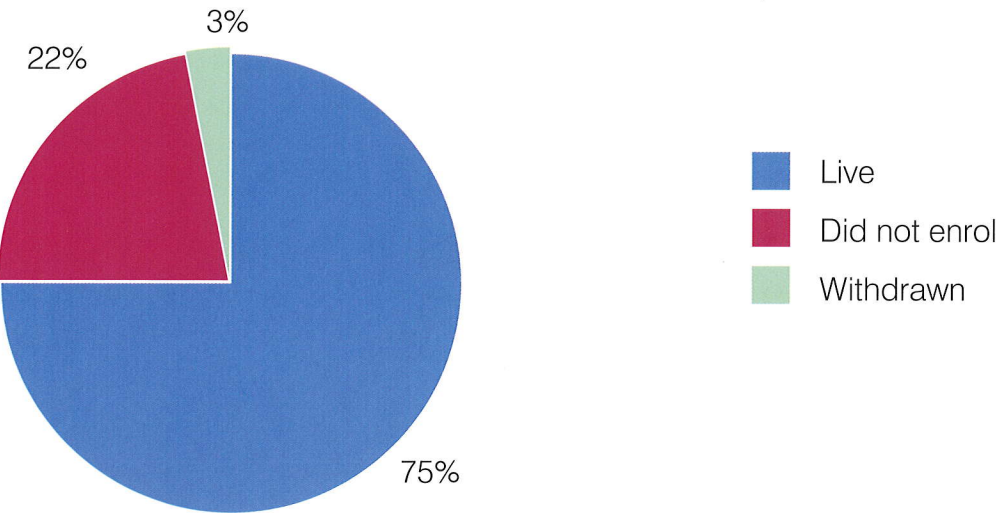
Pre-entry Workshops – Manchester



Live	56
Did not enrol	16
Withdrawn	2

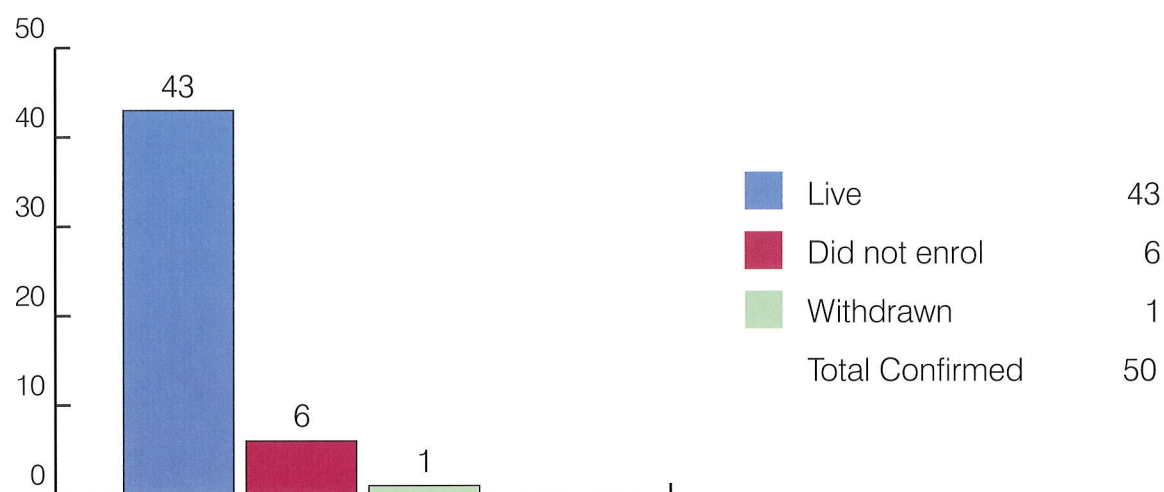
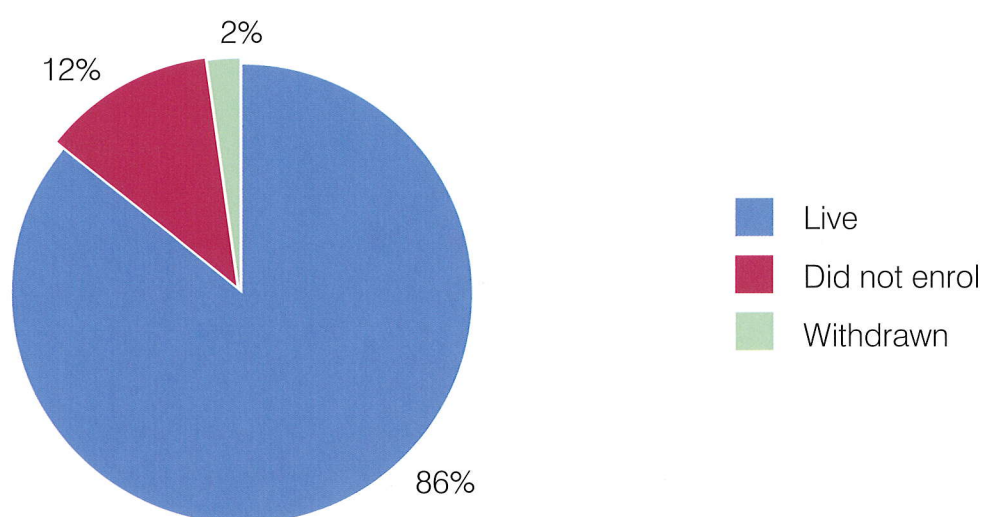
**Total Confirmed
and did not attend 74**

Pre-entry Workshops – Manchester



Live	43
Did not enrol	6
Withdrawn	1
Total Confirmed	50

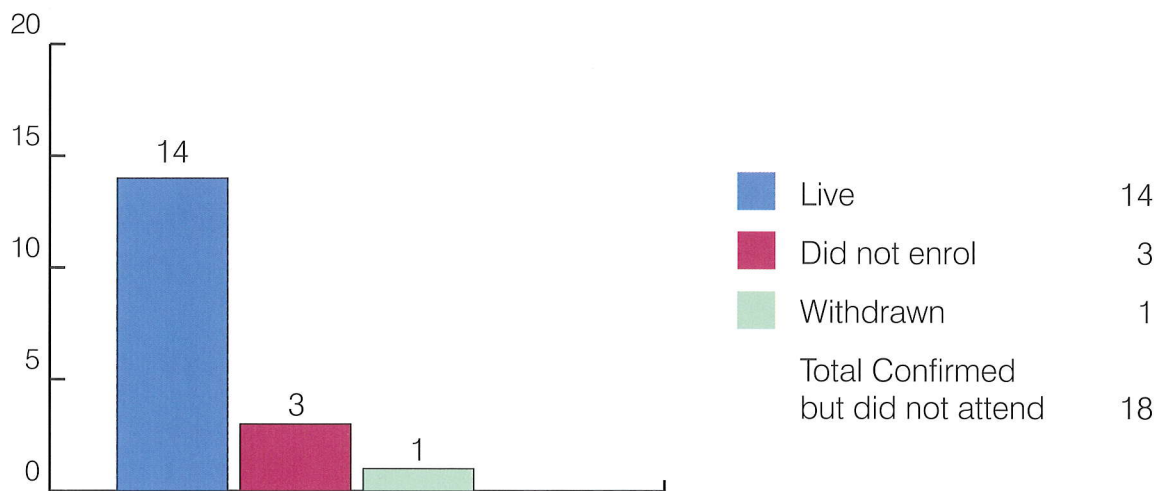
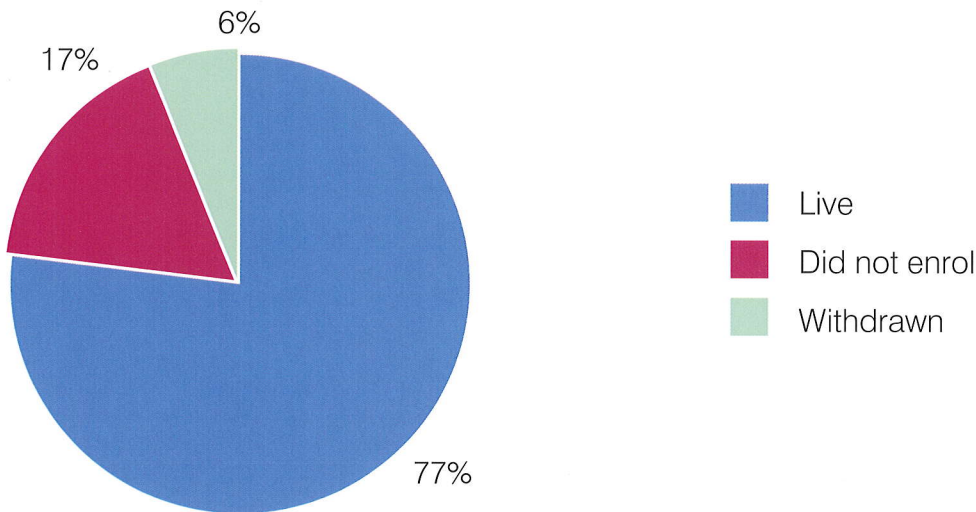
Pre-entry Workshops – Cheshire



Live	14
Did not enrol	3
Withdrawn	1

**Total Confirmed
and did not attend 18**

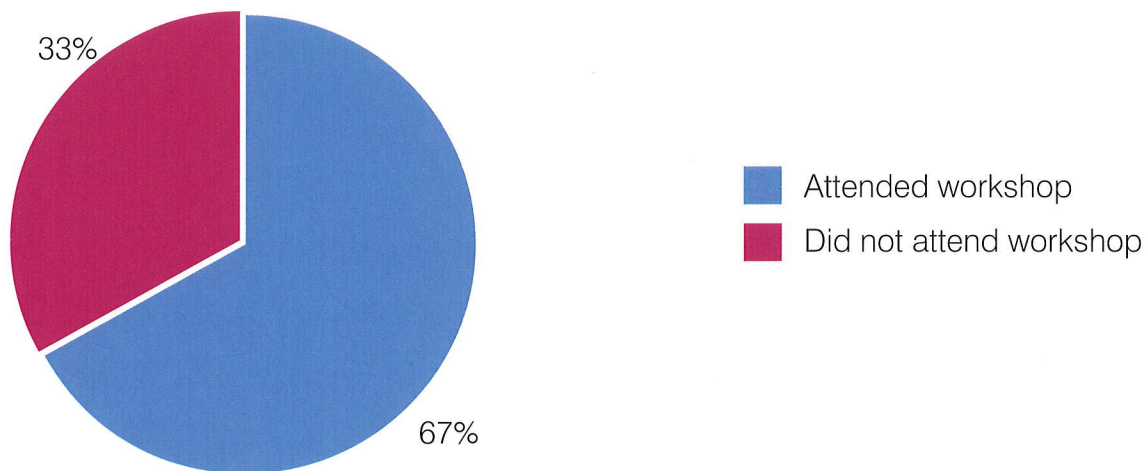
Pre-entry Workshops – Cheshire



Attended workshop	149
Did not attend workshop	74

**Total Confirmed
Manchester 223**

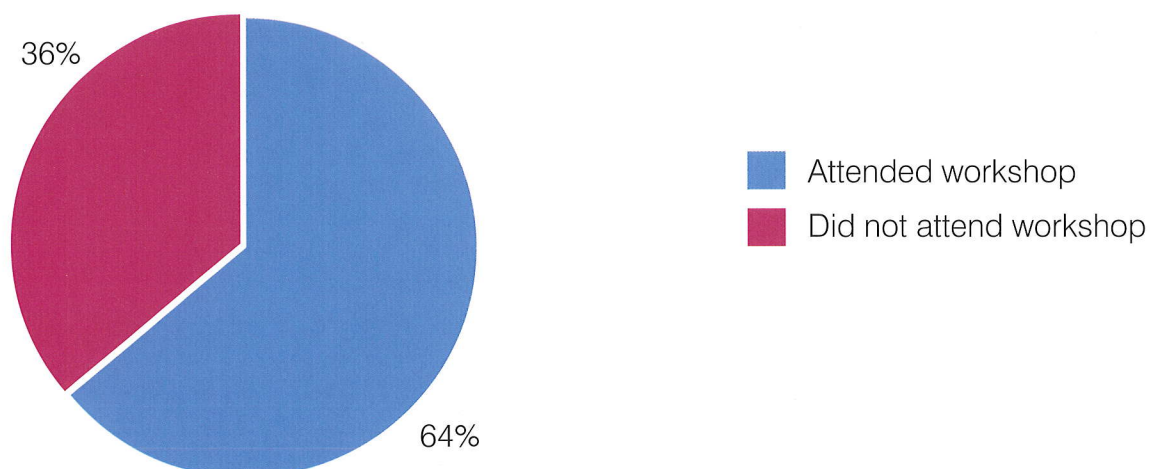
Pre-entry Workshops – Manchester



Attended workshop	32
Did not attend workshop	18

Total Confirmed Cheshire 50

Pre-entry Workshops – Cheshire



Appendix H – Database of Events

Start Date	Event Name	Attendance	Event Type ID	Location	Event Description	Employee ID
Start Date by Month – June 2003						
25/06/2003	MMU Open Day		Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Publicising TIPS	All Staff
Start Date by Month – July 2003						
08/07/2003	Summer School	12	Pre-entry	MMU John Dalton	Study Skills	All Staff
08/07/2003	Summer School	25	Pre-entry	MMU Alsager	Study Skills	Edwards, Martin
Start Date by Month – August 2003						
14/08/2003	Clearing		Pre-entry	MMU All Saints	Liaising with applicants over the phone	All Staff
15/08/2003	Clearing		Pre-entry	MMU All Saints	Liaising with applicants over the phone	Rice Gill, Edwards Martin
Start Date by Month – September 2003						
01/09/2003	September One-to-One Sessions	2	On-course	MMU Manchester	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
08/09/2003	All Saints Pre-entry Event	153	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Pre-entry day	All Staff
15/09/2003	MMU Cheshire Pre-entry Day	34	Pre-entry	MMU Alsager	Pre-entry day	All Staff
23/09/2003	Induction Talk	45	Induction	MMU Geoffrey Manton	General introduction to student services	Rice, Gill
24/09/2003	Induction Talk	30	Induction	MMU Righton	General introduction to student services	Rice, Gill
25/09/2003	Induction Talk	100	Induction	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Learning support overview	Edwards, Martin
Start Date by Month – October 2003						
01/10/2003	Drop-in session	0	On-course	MMU Cheshire	General advice	Edwards, Martin
01/10/2003	Drop-in session	0	On-course	MMU All Saints	General advice	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
01/10/2003	October One-to-One Sessions	9	On-course	MMU Manchester	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
08/10/2003	MMU Open Day		Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Open day	Rice Gill, Edwards Martin
14/10/2003	Application Roadshow	10	Pre-entry	S. Trafford College	UCAS applications	Rice, Gill
15/10/2003	Application Roadshow	5	Pre-entry	S. Trafford College	UCAS applications	Edwards, Martin
15/10/2003	Application Roadshow	5	Pre-entry	Salford College	UCAS applications	Rice, Gill
16/10/2003	Application Roadshow	10	Pre-entry	MANCAT Nicholls	UCAS applications	Rice, Gill
17/10/2003	Application Roadshow	10	Pre-entry	MANCAT Moston	UCAS applications	Rice, Gill
20/10/2003	Application Roadshow	3	Pre-entry	MANCAT Wythenshawe	UCAS applications	Edwards, Martin
22/10/2003	Making ends meet	0	On-course	MMU Alsager	Budgeting workshop	Edwards, Martin
23/10/2003	Application Roadshow	7	On-course	MANCAT Openshaw	UCAS applications	Rice, Gill
29/10/2003	Headstart	22	Pre-entry	City College	Plagiarism/referencing	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
29/10/2003	Making ends meet	2	On-course	MMU John Dalton Extension	Budgeting workshop	Edwards, Martin
31/10/2003	Making ends meet	0	On-course	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Budgeting workshop	Edwards, Martin
Start Date by Month – November 2003						
01/11/2003	November One-to-One Sessions	27	On-course	MMU Man & Cheshire	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
03/11/2003	Study skills workshop	60	On-course	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Presentation skills	Rice, Gill
05/11/2003	Approaches to Learning	100	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Intro to mature students	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
05/11/2003	Making ends meet	0	On-course	MMU Crewe	Budgeting workshop	Edwards, Martin
06/11/2003	Application Roadshow	10	Pre-entry	S.Cheshire College	UCAS applications	Edwards, Martin
07/11/2003	Making ends meet	0	On-course	MMU Hollings	Budgeting workshop	Edwards, Martin
10/11/2003	City College Open Day	5	Pre-entry	City College	UCAS applications	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen

Start Date	Event Name	Attendance	Event Type ID	Location	Event Description	Employee ID
11/11/2003	Headstart	10	Pre-entry	MANCAT Moston	Research	Rice, Gill
12/11/2003	Headstart	10	Pre-entry	MANCAT Moston	Presentation skills	Rice, Gill
12/11/2003	Making ends meet	0	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Budgeting workshop	Edwards, Martin
14/11/2003	Making ends meet	0	On-course	MMU Aytoun	Budgeting workshop	Edwards, Martin
17/11/2003	Application Roadshow	14	Pre-entry	MANCAT Nicholls	UCAS applications/ HE awareness	Rice, Gill
17/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	0	On-course	MMU Elizabeth Gaskell	Hardship fund applications	Edwards, Martin
18/11/2003	Headstart	20	Pre-entry	MANCAT Moston	Referencing	Edwards, Martin
19/11/2003	Approaches to Learning	15	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Reflection and recording study skills	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
19/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	2	On-course	MMU John Dalton Ext	Hardships fund applications	Edwards, Martin
20/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	1	On-course	MMU Cheshire Crewe	Hardship fund applications	Edwards, Martin
24/11/2003	Application Roadshow	12	Pre-entry	MANCAT Nicholls	UCAS applications	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
24/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	0	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Hardship fund applications	Edwards, Martin
25/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	0	On-course	MMU Chatham	Hardship fund applications	Edwards, Martin
25/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	4	On-course	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Hardship fund applications	Edwards, Martin
26/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	1	On-course	MMU Aytoun Building	Hardship fund applications	Edwards, Martin
27/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	6	On-course	MMU Cheshire Alsager	Hardship fund applications	Edwards, Martin
28/11/2003	Hardship Fund Workshop	0	On-course	MMU Hollings	Hardship fund application	Edwards, Martin
Start Date by Month – December 2003						
01/12/2003	December One-to-One Sessions	41	On-course	MMU Man & Cheshire	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
03/12/2003	Approaches to Learning	8	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Assignment support	Duggan, Karen
03/12/2003	Approaches to Learning	100	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Intro to Sociology task 2	Duggan, Karen
03/12/2003	Drop in Session	8	On-course	MMU Didsbury	General advice for mature students	Duggan, Karen
08/12/2003	Tips on Tour	3	Dissemination	MMU Chatham	TIPS progress update	Duggan, Karen
10/12/2003	Approaches to Learning	6	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Theory and practice study skills	Rice, Gill
10/12/2003	Tips on Tour	2	Dissemination	MMU Aytoun	TIPS progress update	Duggan, Karen
11/12/2003	Tips on Tour	0	Dissemination	MMU Didsbury	TIPS progress update	Duggan, Karen
12/12/2003	Tips on Tour	2	Dissemination	MMU Elizabeth Gaskell	TIPS progress update	Duggan, Karen
Start Date by Month – January 2004						
05/01/2004	January One-to-One Sessions	18	On-course	MMU Man & Cheshire	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
12/01/2004	Tips on Tour	8	Dissemination	MMU Alsager	TIPS progress update	Duggan, Karen
14/01/2004	Tips on Tour	2	Dissemination	MMU Hollings	TIPS progress update	Duggan, Karen
15/01/2004	Tips on Tour	1	Dissemination	MMU John Dalton	TIPS progress update	Duggan, Karen
16/01/2004	Tips on Tour	4	Dissemination	MMU All Saints West	TIPS progress update	Duggan, Karen
21/01/2004	Visit day	12	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Advice and guidance	Rice, Gill
26/01/2004	Headstart/HE Advice	77	Pre-entry	Xaverian College	Study skills for HE	Duggan, Karen
27/01/2004	HE entry advice	33	Pre-entry	MANCAT Moston	UCAS applications and general advice	Rice, Gill
27/01/2004	Overview of TIPS	131	On-course	MMU Business School	Overview of TIPS and available study skills support	Duggan, Karen
28/01/2004	Visit Day	10	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	General info about HE	Rice, Gill
30/01/2004	Headstart	67	Pre-entry	Xaverian College	Study skills for HE	Rice, Gill

Start Date	Event Name	Attendance	Event Type ID	Location	Event Description	Employee ID
Start Date by Month – February 2004						
01/02/2004	February One-to-one	13	On-course	MMU Man & Cheshire	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
04/02/2004	TIPS 4 a Brighter Future	8	Pre-entry	South Cheshire College	General preparation for HE	Edwards, Martin
04/02/2004	Visit Day	5	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	General advice about HE	Rice, Gill
05/02/2004	TIPS 4 a Brighter Future	18	On-course	MMU Alsager	Foundation Year info about TIPS	Edwards, Martin
10/02/2004	Headstart	10	Pre-entry	Newcastle College	Referencing/Plagiarism	Edwards, Martin
10/02/2004	Study Skills	10	On-course	MMU Cavendish	Essay Writing	Rice, Gill
11/02/2004	Approaches to Learning	10	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Basic IT workshop	Duggan, Karen
11/02/2004	TIPS 4 a Brighter Future	4	Pre-entry	South Cheshire College	General preparation for HE	Edwards, Martin
11/02/2004	Visit Day	6	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	General advice about HE	Rice, Gill
12/02/2004	Headstart	18	Pre-entry	Newcastle College	Referencing/Plagiarism	Edwards, Martin
18/02/2004	Visit Day	1	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	General advice about HE	Rice, Gill
23/02/2004	Headstart	11	Pre-entry	South Cheshire College	Research/Essay Writing	Edwards, Martin
23/02/2004	Headstart	6	Pre-entry	South Cheshire College	Research/Essay Writing	Edwards, Martin
25/02/2004	Visit Day	24	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	General advice about HE	Rice, Gill
Start Date by Month – March 2004						
01/03/2004	March One-to-One Sessions	34	On-course	All MMU	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
01/03/2004	Skills City		Pre-entry	G-Mex	General advice about HE	All Staff
02/03/2004	Skills City		Pre-entry	G-Mex	General advice about HE	All Staff
03/03/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	13	On-course	MMU John Dalton	Revision and exam support	Rice, Gill
03/03/2004	Visit Day	15	Pre-entry	MMU Cheshire	General advice about HE	Edwards, Martin
05/03/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	33	On-course	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Revision and exam skills	Duggan, Karen
05/03/2004	Headstart	17	Pre-entry	South Cheshire College	Research/Essay Writing	Edwards, Martin
08/03/2004	Headstart	14	Pre-entry	South Cheshire College	Research/Essay Writing	Edwards, Martin
10/03/2004	AIM Higher Launch		Dissemination	UMIST	Headstart/College 4 us presentation	Duggan, Karen
12/03/2004	14-19 Strategy Launch		Pre-entry	Sports City	Advice about HE	Duggan, Karen
16/03/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	9	On-course	MMU Crewe	Exam Workshop	Edwards, Martin
17/03/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	5	On-course	MMU Alsager	Revision and exam skills	Edwards, Martin
17/03/2004	Visit Day	25	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	General advice about HE	Rice, Gill
19/03/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	19	On-course	MMU Aytoun	Revision and exam skills	Rice, Gill
23/03/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	63	On-course	MMU Aytoun/Marketing	Revision and exam support	Rice, Gill
24/03/2004	Visit Day	20	Pre-entry	MMU Crewe	General advice about HE	Edwards, Martin
26/03/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	19	On-course	MMU All Saints West	Revision and exam skills	Duggan, Karen
31/03/2004	Mature Students Workshop	35	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Information for mature students	Rice, Gill
31/03/2004	Visit Day	20	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	General advice about HE	Rice, Gill
Start Date by Month – April 2004						
01/04/2004	Headstart	35	Pre-entry	Parrs Wood/University of Manchester	Exams and revision	All Staff
05/04/2004	April One-to-one sessions	11	On-course	All MMU	One to one advice and guidance	All Staff
19/04/2004	UCAS Support	13	Pre-entry	South Cheshire College	Presentation	Edwards, Martin
22/04/2004	UCAS Support	13	Pre-entry	South Cheshire College	Presentation	Edwards, Martin

Start Date	Event Name	Attendance	Event Type ID	Location	Event Description	Employee ID
27/04/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	0	On-course	MMU John Dalton	Exams and revision	Duggan, Karen
27/04/2004	Headstart	30	On-course	Stoke-on-Trent College	Research/Plagiarism	Edwards, Martin
28/04/2004	Connexions	15	Dissemination	MMU Crewe	Talk on Student Finance for Connexions advisers	Edwards, Martin
28/04/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	0	On-course	MMU John Dalton	Exams and revision	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
28/04/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	12	On-course	MMU Aytoun	Exams and revision	Rice, Gill
29/04/2004	CV Support Workshop	11	On-course	MMU Geoffrey Manton	CV building	Edwards, Martin
29/04/2004	Open book exams	14	On-course	MMU Hollings	Open Book exam techniques	Rice, Gill
30/04/2004	CV Support Workshop	0	On-course	MMU Alsager	CV building	Edwards, Martin
Start Date by Month – May 2004						
01/05/2004	May One-to-one sessions	3	On-course	MMU Manchester	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
04/05/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	6	On-course	MMU Alsager	Exams and revision	Edwards, Martin
05/05/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	4	On-course	MMU Aytoun	Exams and revision	Rice, Gill
05/05/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	11	On-course	MMU Crewe	Exams and revision	Edwards, Martin
05/05/2004	Exam Revision Workshop	1	On-course	MMU Crewe	Exams and revision	Edwards, Martin
05/05/2004	IT workshop	0	On-course	MMU Didsbury	Basic IT	Duggan, Karen
05/05/2004	Visit Day	0	Pre-entry	MMU Crewe	General advice on HE	Edwards, Martin
19/05/2004	Headstart	27	Pre-entry	Newcastle College	Referencing/Plagiarism	Edwards, Martin
19/05/2004	Learning and Teaching Conference	30	Dissemination	MMU Didsbury	Dissemination of good practice	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
20/05/2004	CV Support Workshop	4	On-course	MMU Aytoun Business School	CV Building	Edwards, Martin
25/05/2004	CV Support Workshop	0	On-course	MMU Crewe Business Department	CV Building	Edwards, Martin
26/05/2004	Connexions	22	Dissemination	MMU Crewe	Talk on Student Finance for Connexions advisers	Edwards, Martin
26/05/2004	Impartial Pre-entry Dissemination Event	45	Dissemination	MMSU	Dissemination of good practice	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
Start Date by Month – June 2004						
01/06/2004	June One-to-one sessions	3	On-course	Mmu Manchester	One-to-one advice and guidance	All Staff
09/06/2004	A Holistic Approach To Student Support	5	Dissemination	UCLAN	Dissemination Of Project Findings-Finance	Rice Gill, Edwards Martin
23/06/2004	Open Day	26	Pre-entry	MMU Geoffrey Manton	Mature Students Presentation	Rice, Gill
Start Date by Month – July 2004						
01/07/2004	July one-to-one sessions	2	On-course	MMU Manchester	One-to-one advice and guidance	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
21/07/2004	Exam re-sit workshop	10	On-course	Aytoun	Exams and revision	Rice, Gill
28/07/2004	Exam re-sit workshop	0	On-course	Didsbury	Exams and revision	Rice, Gill
29/07/2004	Exam re-sit workshop	4	On-course	All Saints West	Exams and revision	Rice, Gill
Start Date by Month – August 2004						
01/08/2004	August One-to-one sessions	2	On-course	MMU Manchester	One-to-one advice and guidance	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
10/08/2004	Exam re-sit workshop	0	On-course	John Dalton	Exams and revision	Duggan, Karen
26/08/2004	Glasgow Conference	15	Dissemination	Glasgow	Dissemination Of Project Findings	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen

Start Date	Event Name	Attendance	Event Type ID	Location	Event Description	Employee ID
<i>Start Date by Month – September 2004</i>						
06/09/2004	Foundation Year	49	Pre-entry	Geoffrey Manton	Finance Presentation	Rice, Gill
15/09/2004	L & T Conference	12	Dissemination	Alsager	Dissemination Of Project Findings	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
<i>Start Date by Month – October 2004</i>						
14/10/2004	Community Psychology Conference	45	Dissemination	Exeter	Dissemination Of Project Findings	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen
<i>Start Date by Month – December 2004</i>						
02/12/2004	TIPS Symposium	150	Dissemination	Manchester	Dissemination Of Project Findings	Rice Gill, Duggan Karen

Appendix I – Student Menu

Name: _____

Registration Number: _____

Please tick to indicate support needed.

One to One Advice and Guidance

☐

Study Skills (in any of the following areas):

What is plagiarism and how to avoid it

☐

Critical reading and writing skills

☐

Understanding a brief

☐

Report writing

☐

Essay writing

☐

Referencing

☐

Note taking and summarising

☐

Presentation skills

☐

C.V. support

☐

Exam Revision Techniques

☐

Budgeting and Student Financial Advice

☐

Support on Completion of Hardship Fund Applications

☐

Support and Advice for Mature Students
(on academic and non-academic related issues)

☐

For an appointment please telephone:

Pamela Berry

0161 247 3480

Karen Duggan

0161 247 2375

Gill Rice

0161 247 2274

Martin Edwards (Alsager)

0161 247 5394

Or call in to see us at: Manchester Metropolitan University, All Saints Building, (Room 101, first floor),
Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6BH

Appendix J – Case Recording Forms (front)

First Name

Case No

Last Name

DoB

Student ID

Term Tim Address

Home Address

Postcode:

Postcode:

Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

Faculty

Department

Course

Originating collage

Ethnic origin

Clearing: YES / NO

☐

FY

☐

A

☐

1st

☐

Ex

☐

other

I consent to the TIPS project holding my personal data. I understand that this information will not be shared with third parties outside of MMU without my consent.

Signature

Date

Appendix J – Case Recording Forms (back)

Name

Date and Adviser

Case notes

Page No

Appendix K – Advice Sheet

Clients Name: _____ Date: _____

Issues
We have explored the following issues:

Options
We have agreed the following options:

A follow up appointment has been made for _____ day _____ am/pm

date _____ with _____

Adviser _____

If you are unable to make this appointment please call and let us know.

Appendix L – Form of Authority

I give my consent for the TIPS project staff to contact:

Name

Address

In regards of:

Please Print Name

Signature

Date

Appendix M (i) – Referrals From TIPS

Code _____

Ref _____

Clients Details

First Name	Surname
Address	
Student ID	D.O.B.
Phone	Email

Referred for appointment with

Organisation	
Contact	
Address	
Phone	Email
Date	Time

Brief description of enquiry
TIPS Adviser

Please Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Original to be sent to referral organisation and copies to be given to student and kept on file.

Appendix M (ii) – Referrals to TIPS

Student's Details

First Name _____ Surname _____

Student ID _____ D.O.B. _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Brief description of enquiry

You have been offered an appointment with a TIPS Adviser:

Date _____ Time _____ Place _____

I consent to the above information being given to the TIPS team.

Print name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Referred by

Title/Name

Job Title

Faculty/Dept

Phone

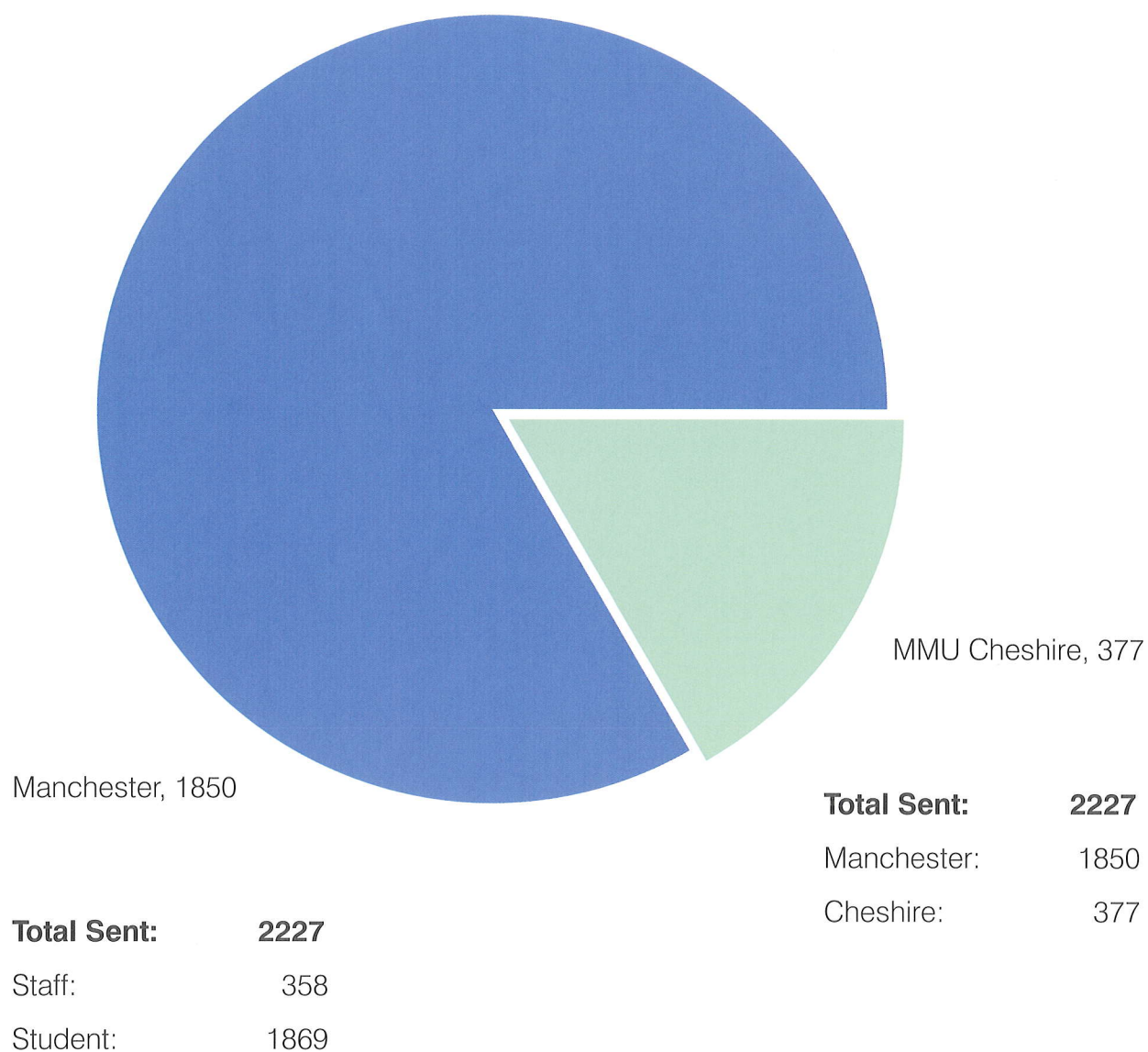
Email

Signature

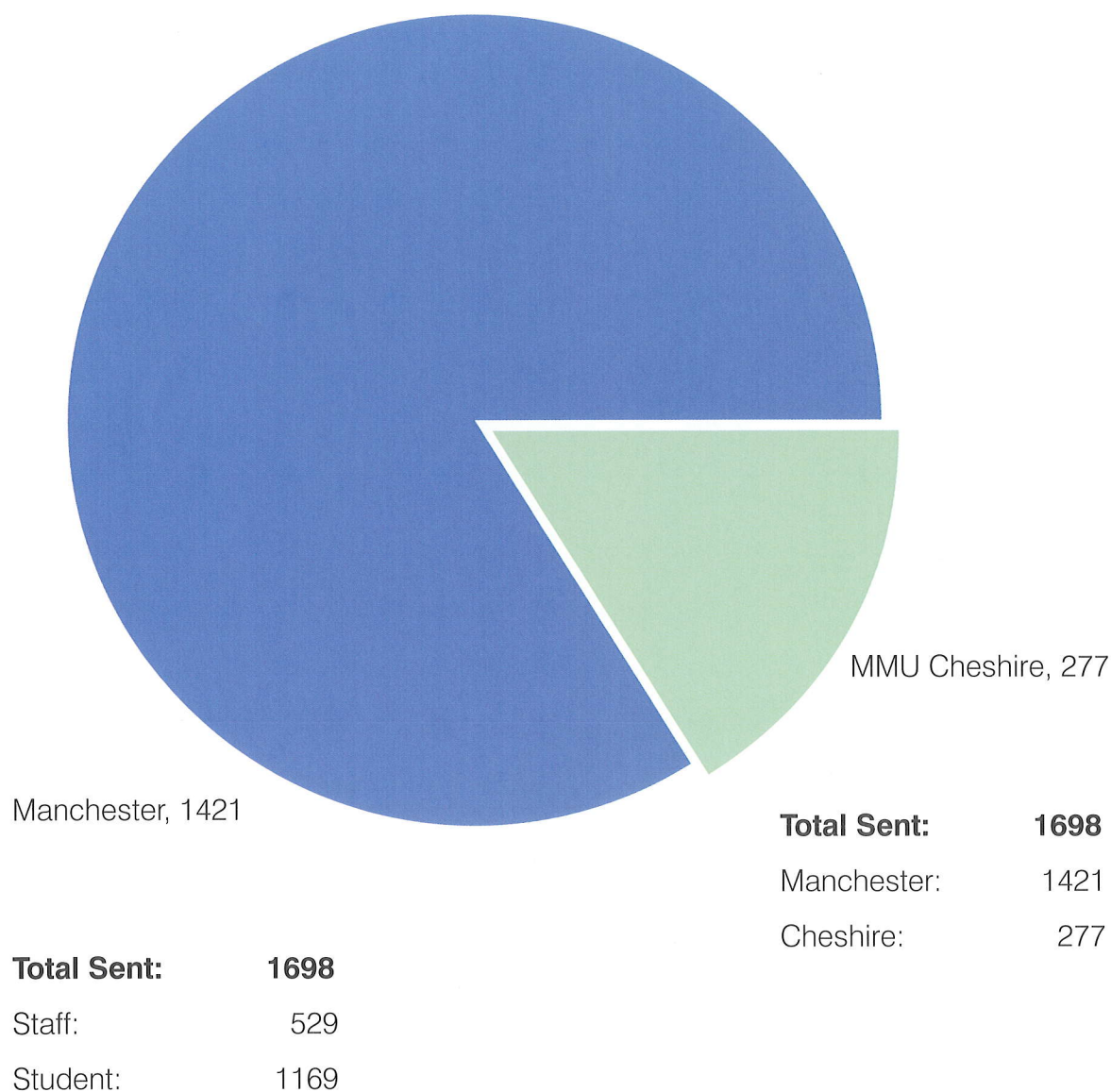
Date

Appendix N – Tracking of Mature Students and Postgraduate 2004 packs

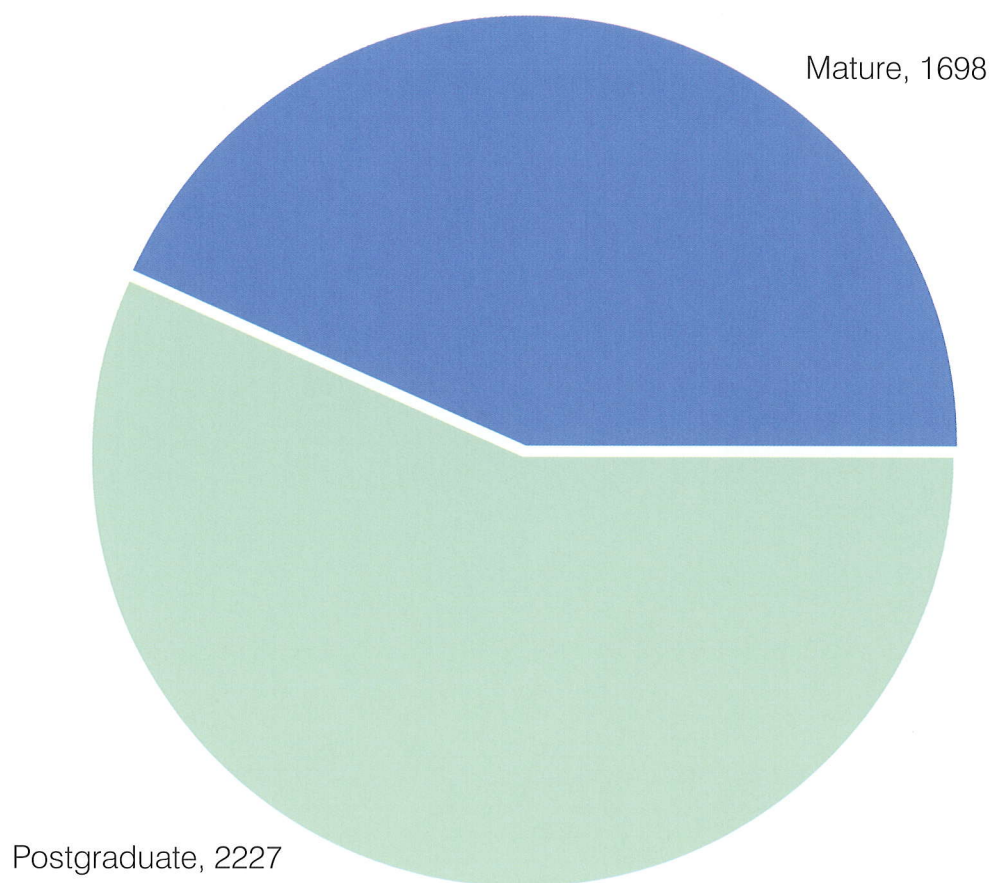
Breakdown of where all postgraduate information packs have been distributed within MMU



Breakdown of where all mature student information packs (UG) have been distributed both internally and externally



Total numbers of both postgraduate and mature student information packs which TIPS have distributed

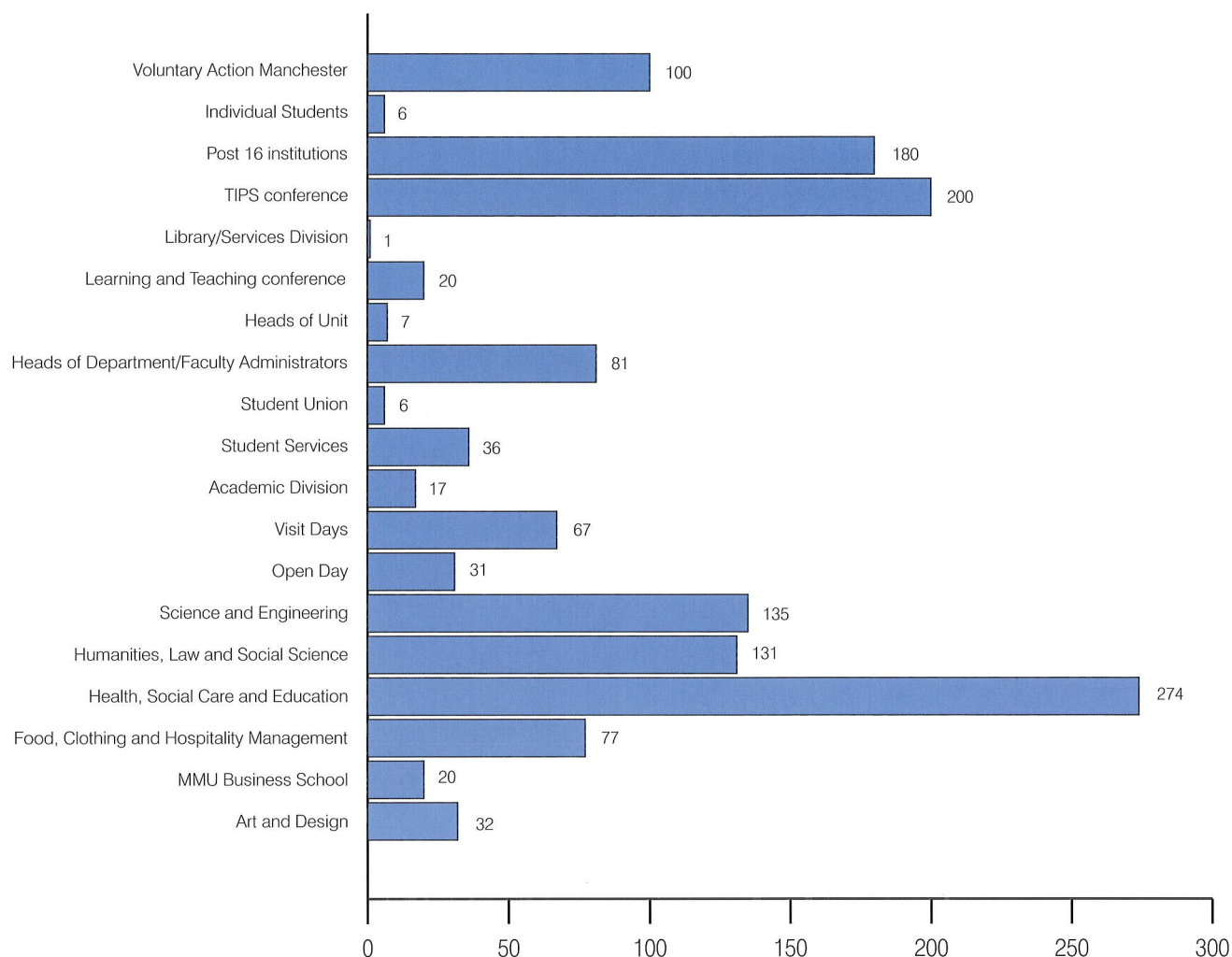


Postgraduate: 2227

Mature: 1698

Total Packs: 3925

Distribution of mature student information packs in Manchester

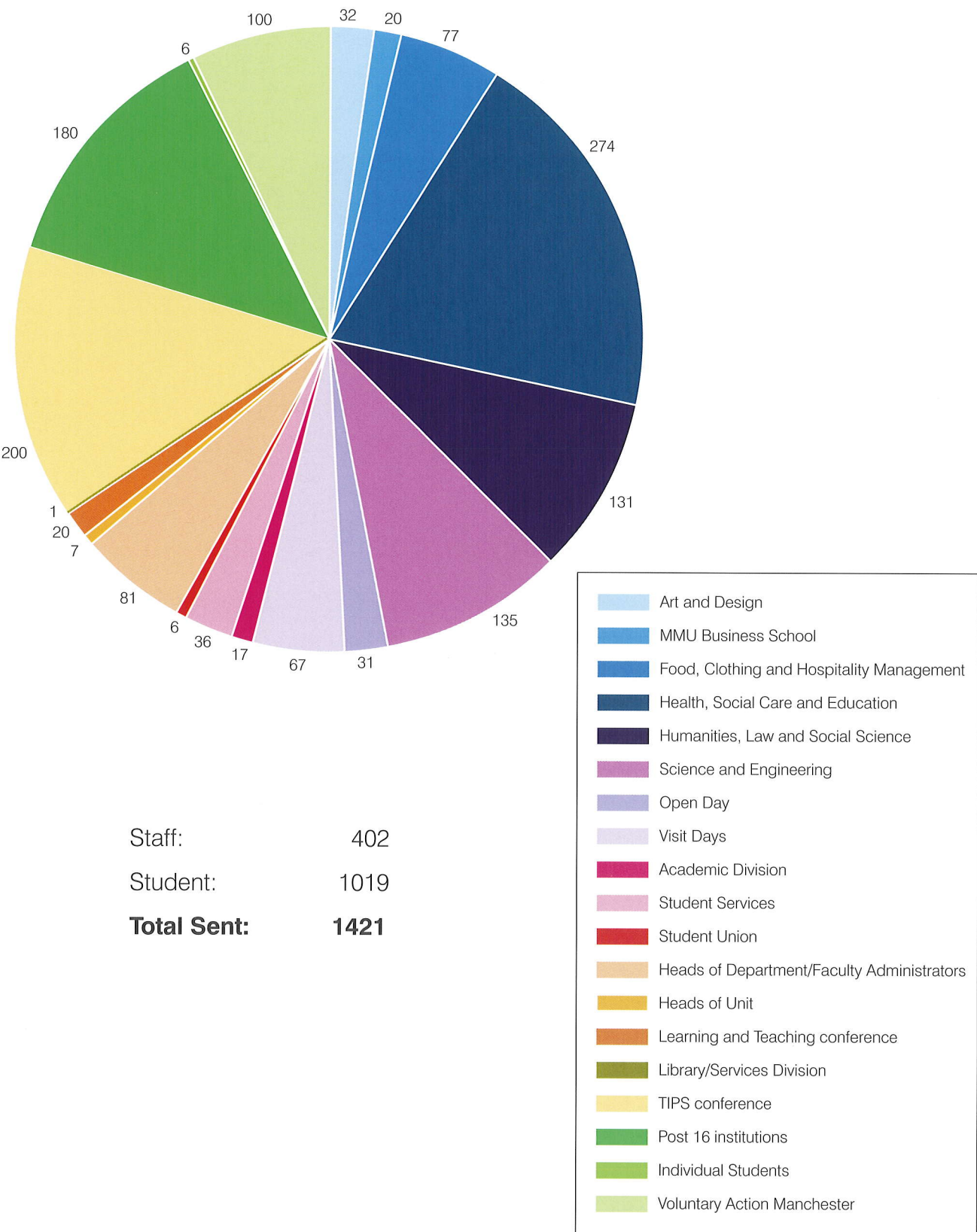


Staff: 402

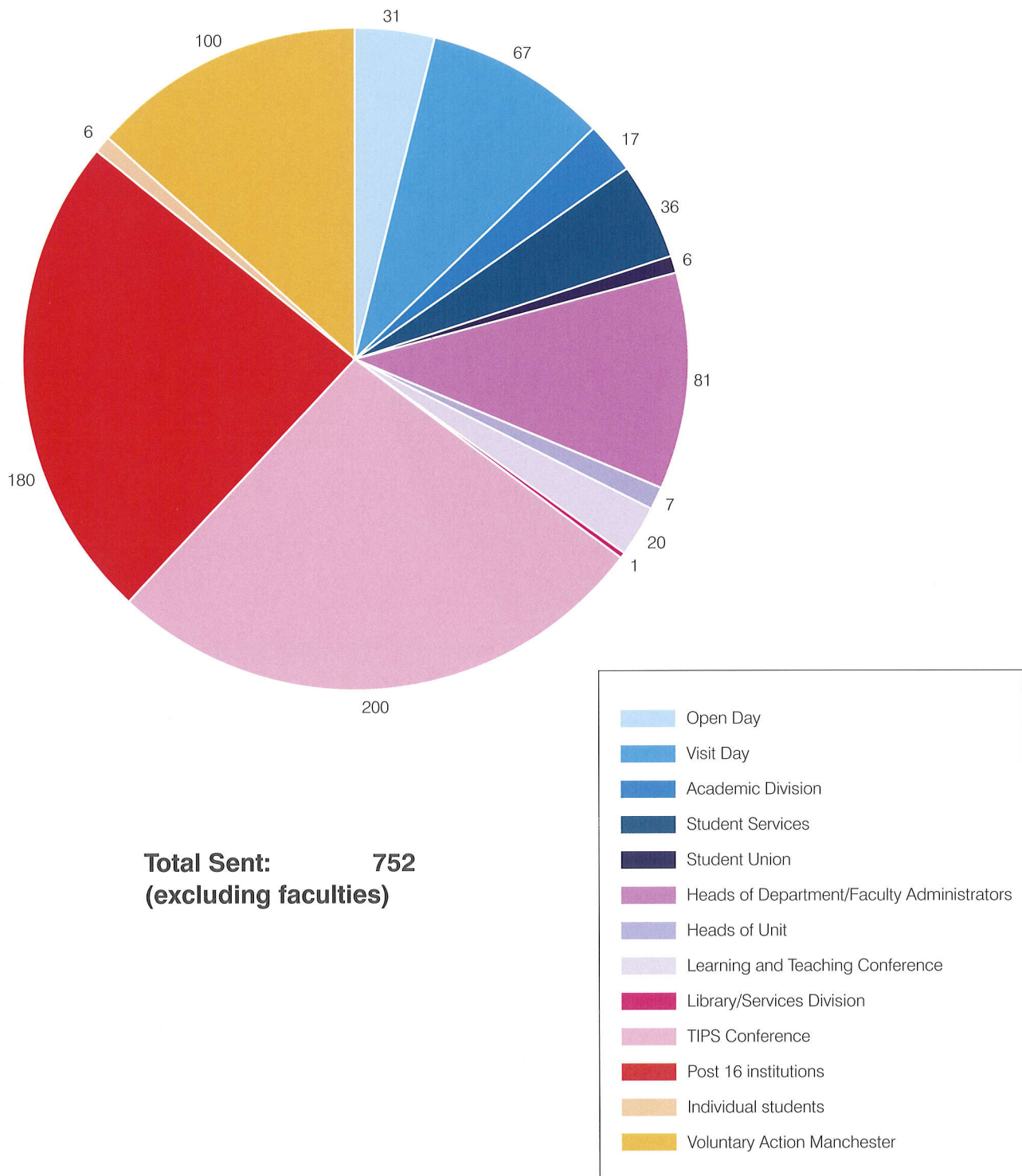
Students: 1019

Total Sent: 1421

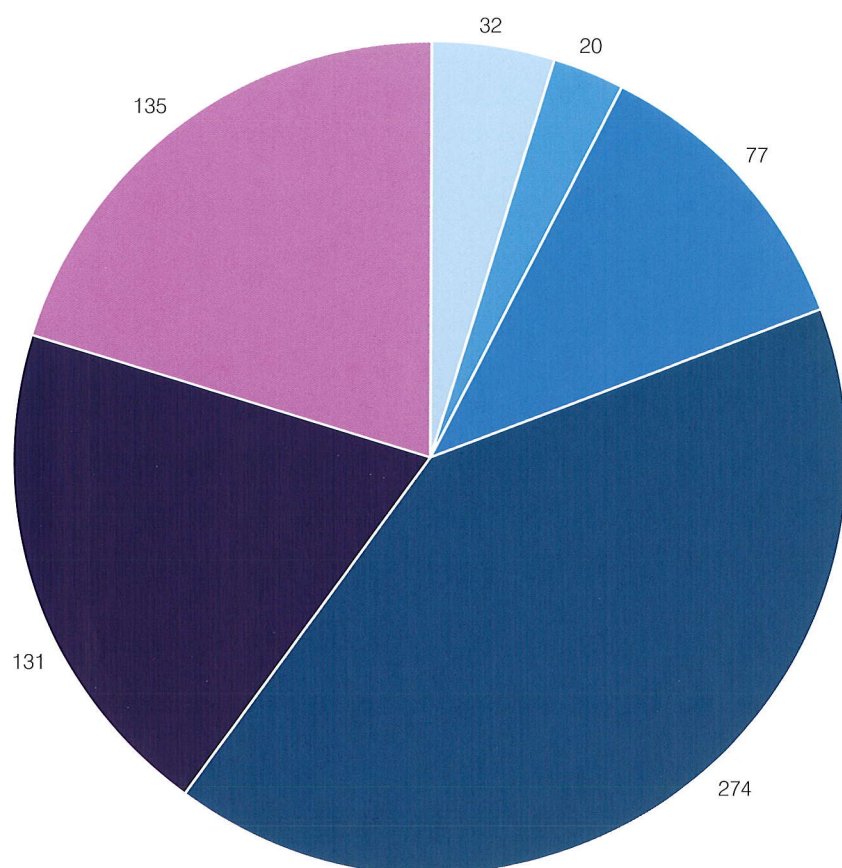
Distribution of mature student information packs in Manchester



Distribution of mature student information packs in Manchester (excluding faculties)



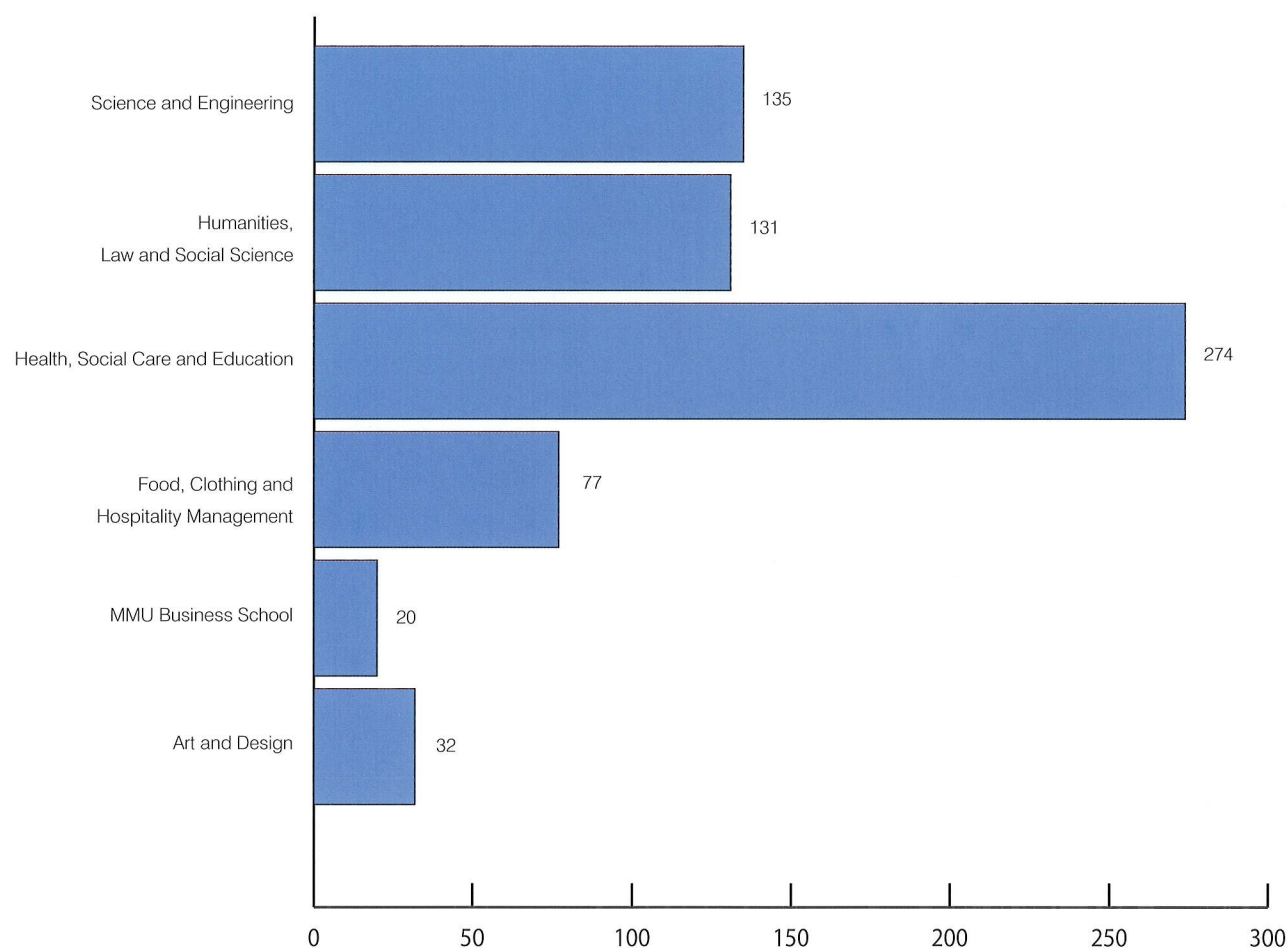
Distribution of mature student information packs within each faculty at MMU in Manchester



Total Sent: 669

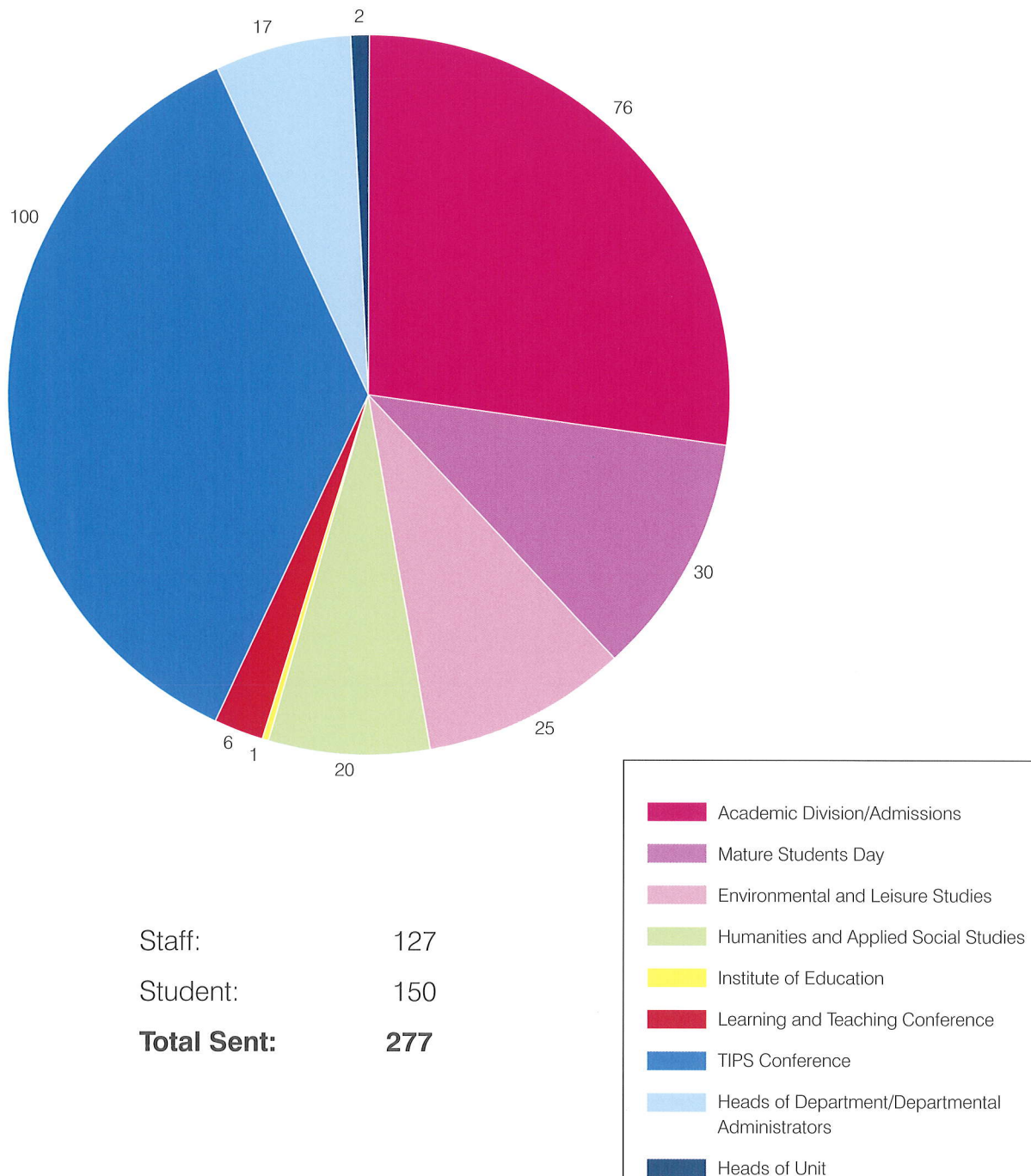


Distribution of mature student information packs within each faculty at MMU (Manchester)

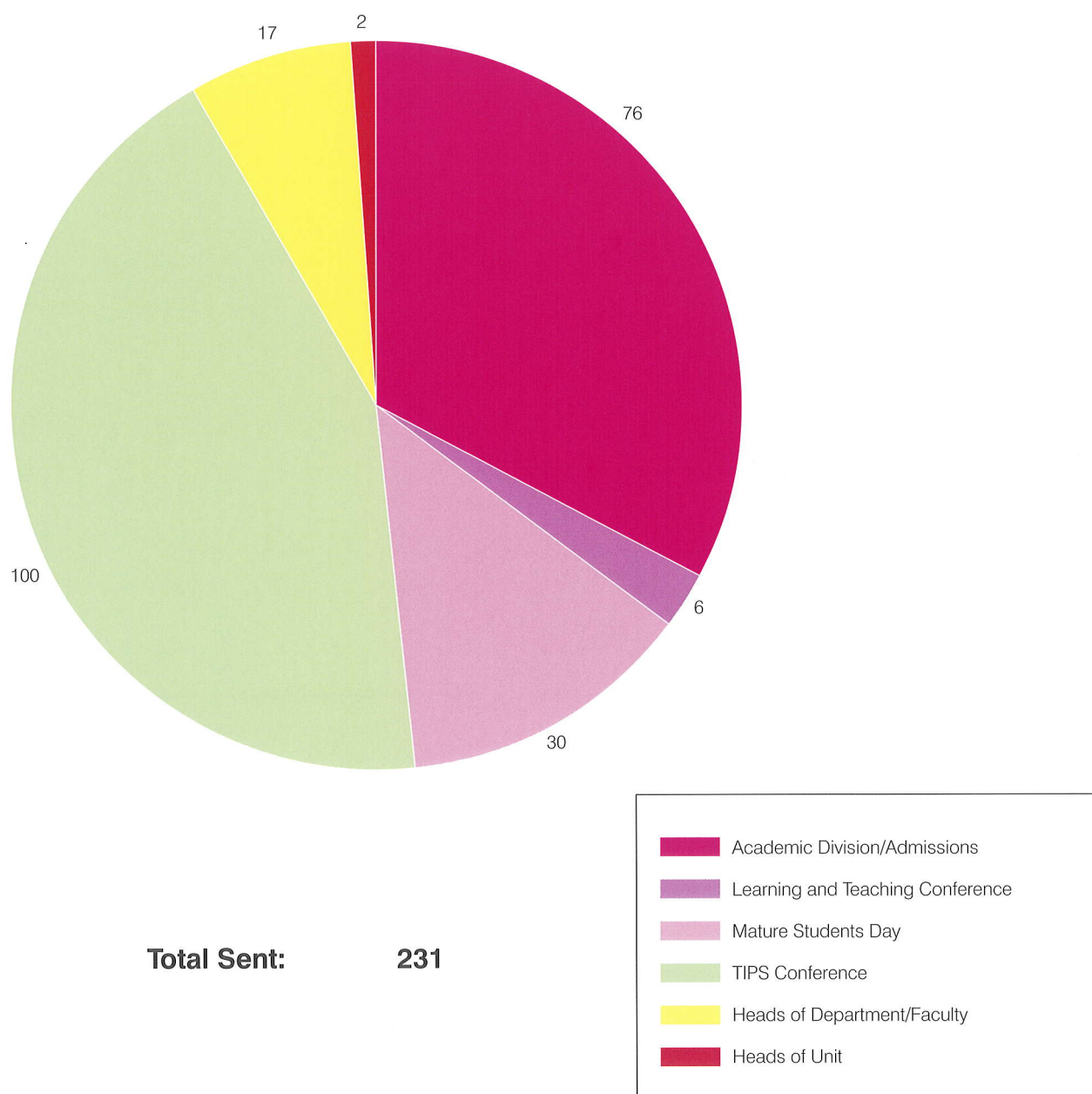


Total Sent: 669

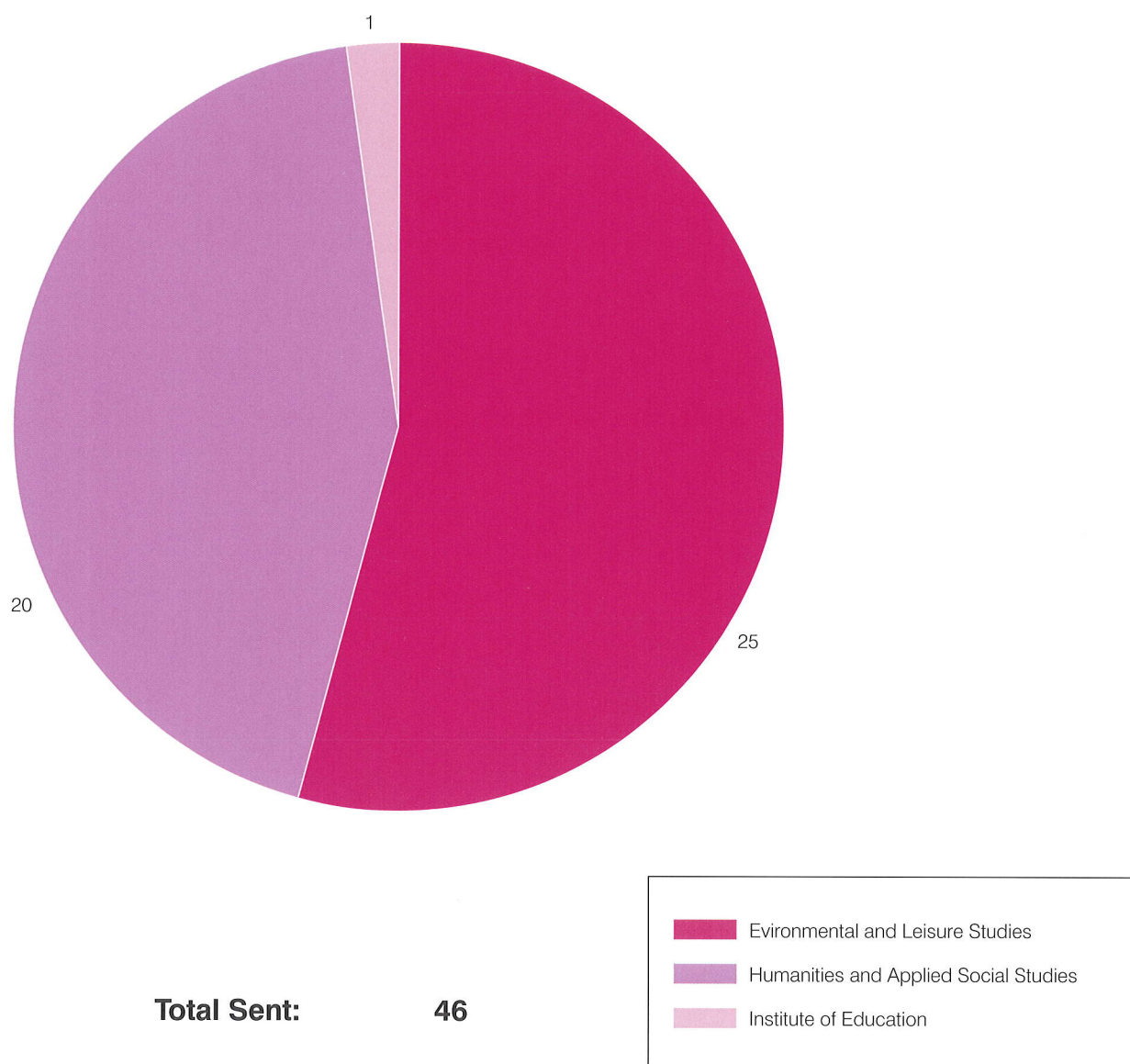
A pie chart to illustrate the breakdown of where the mature student information packs at MMU Cheshire have been distributed



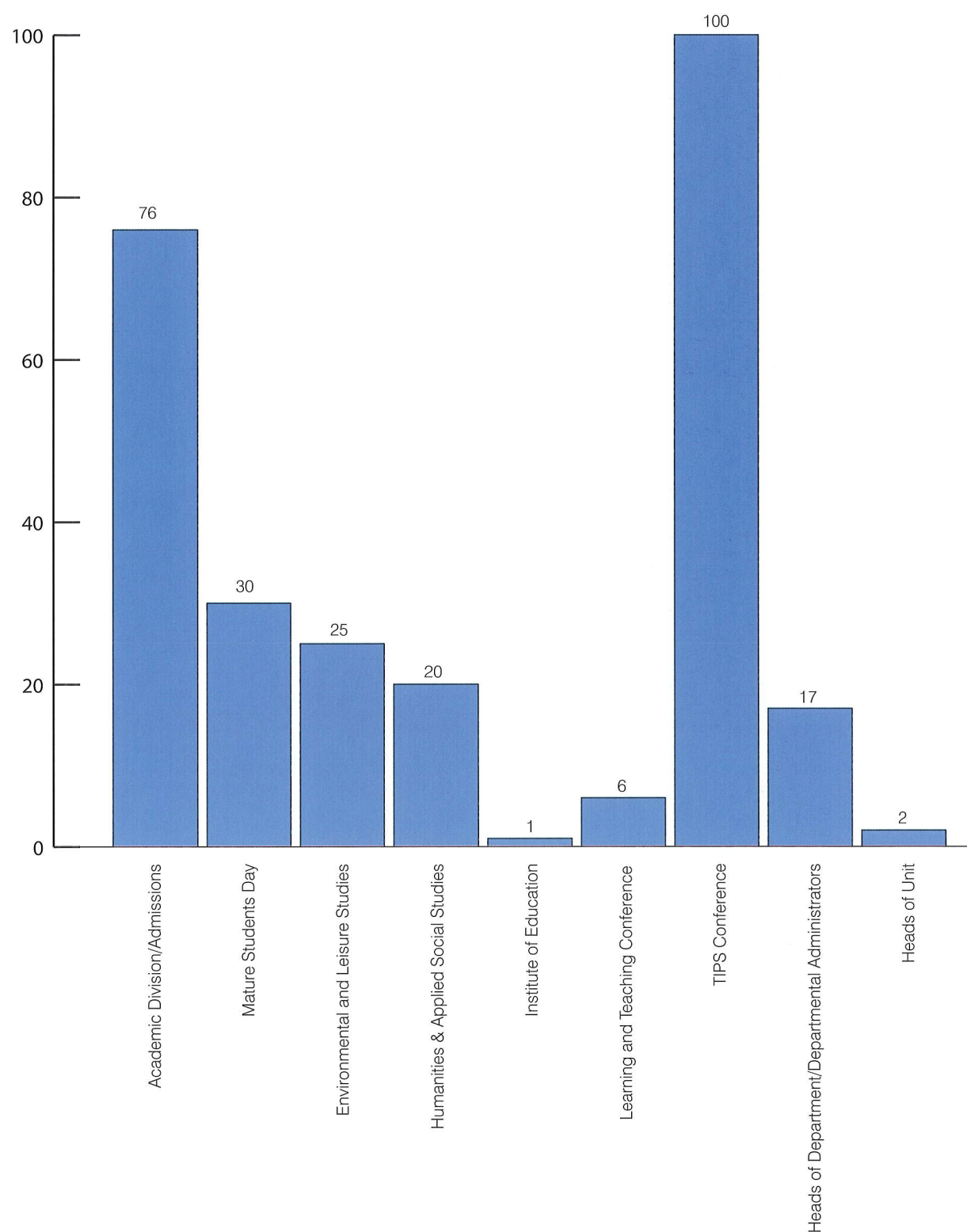
Distribution of mature student information packs at MMU Cheshire (excluding departments)



Distribution of mature student information packs within departments at MMU Cheshire

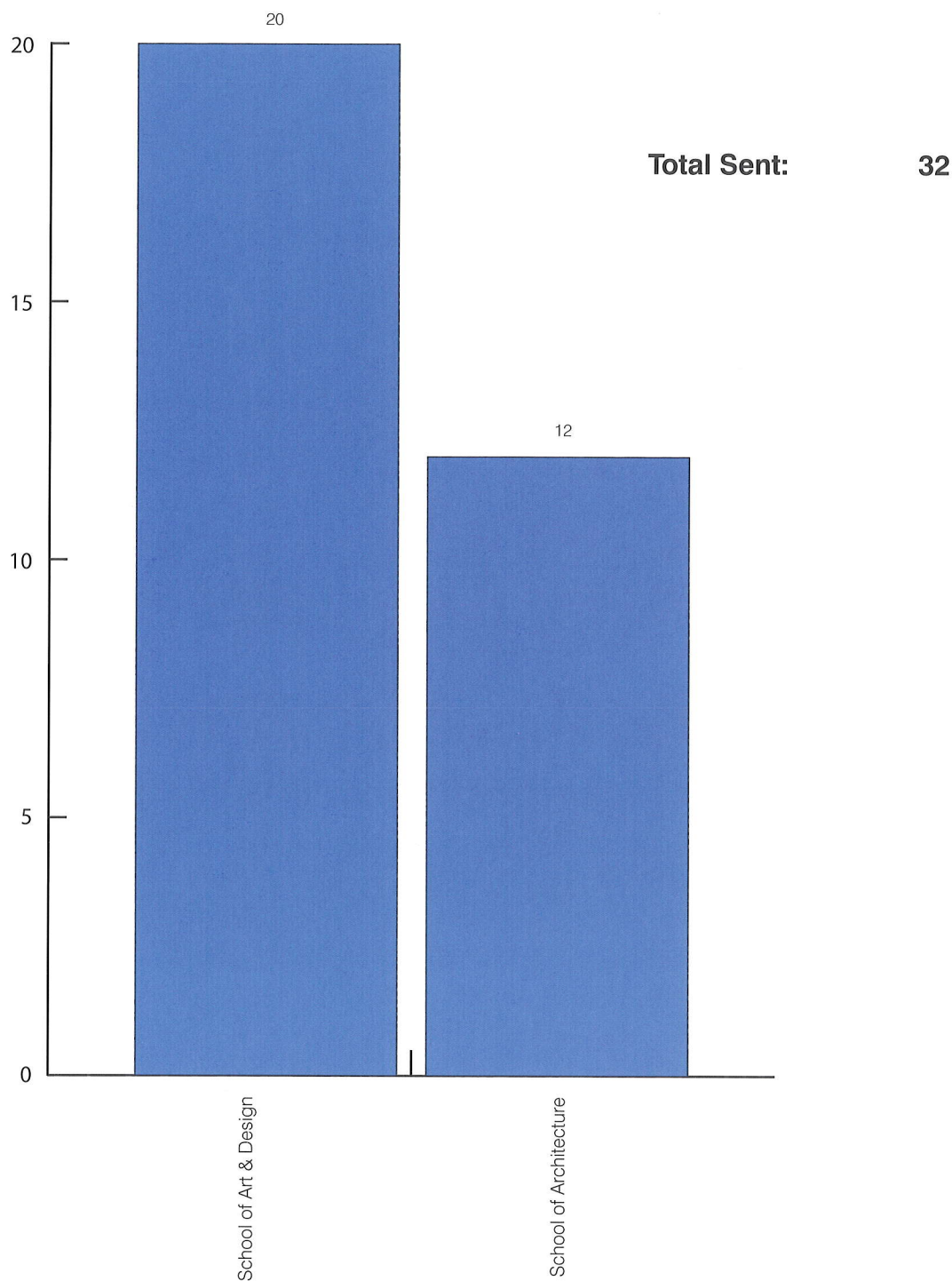


Distribution of mature student information packs at MMU Cheshire

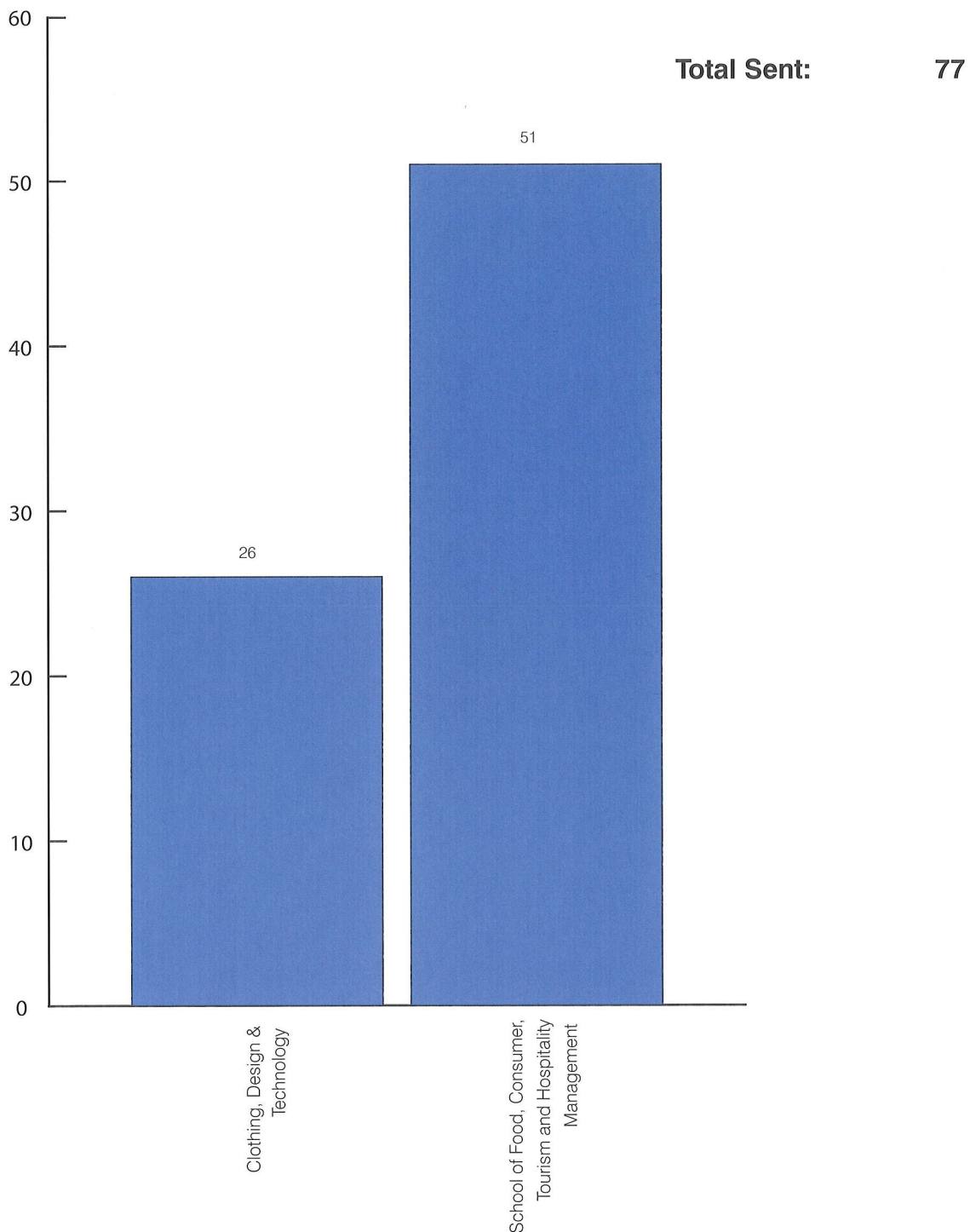


Mature Student Information Packs

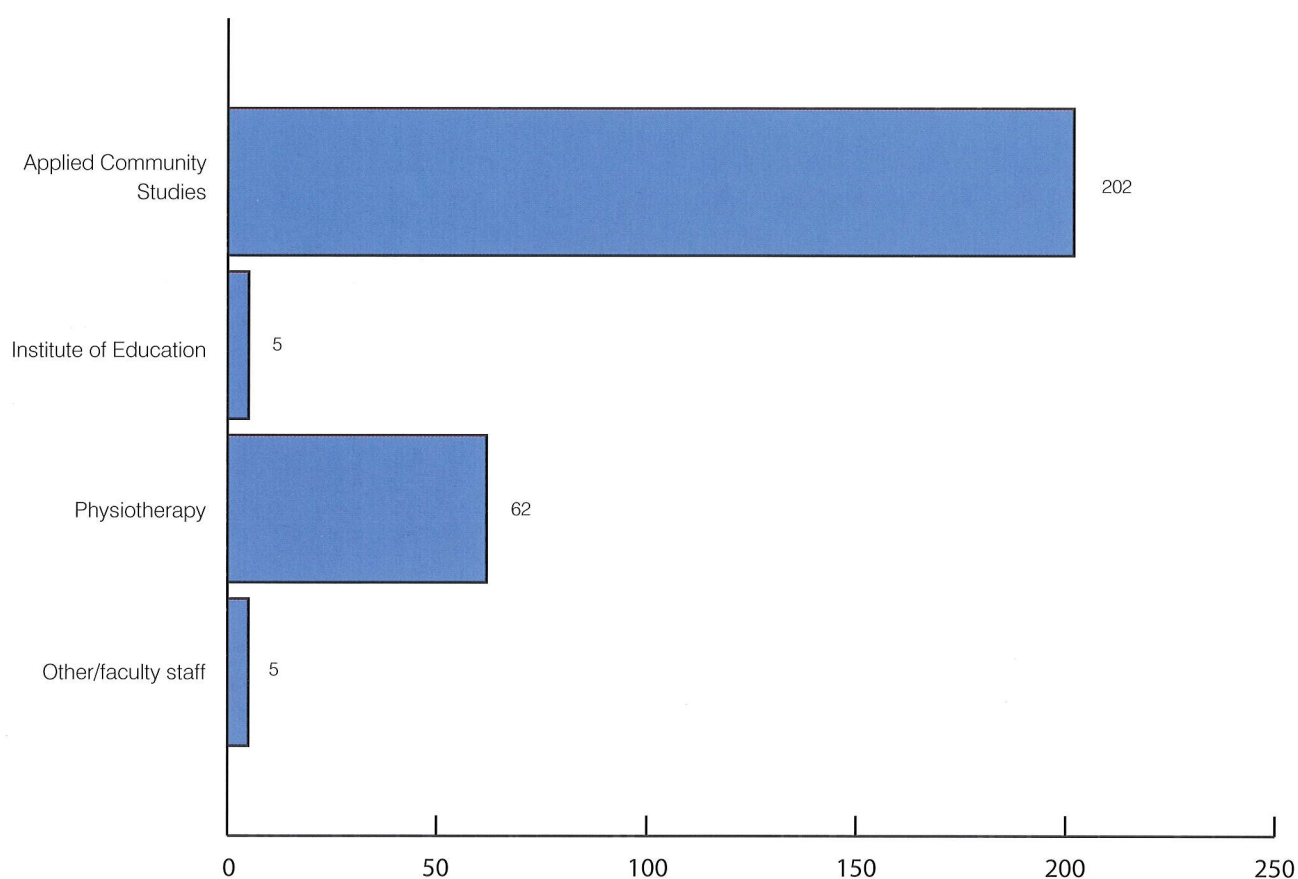
Distribution of mature student information packs within departments in the faculty of Art and Design



Distribution of mature student information packs within departments in the faculty of Food, Clothing, and Hospitality Management

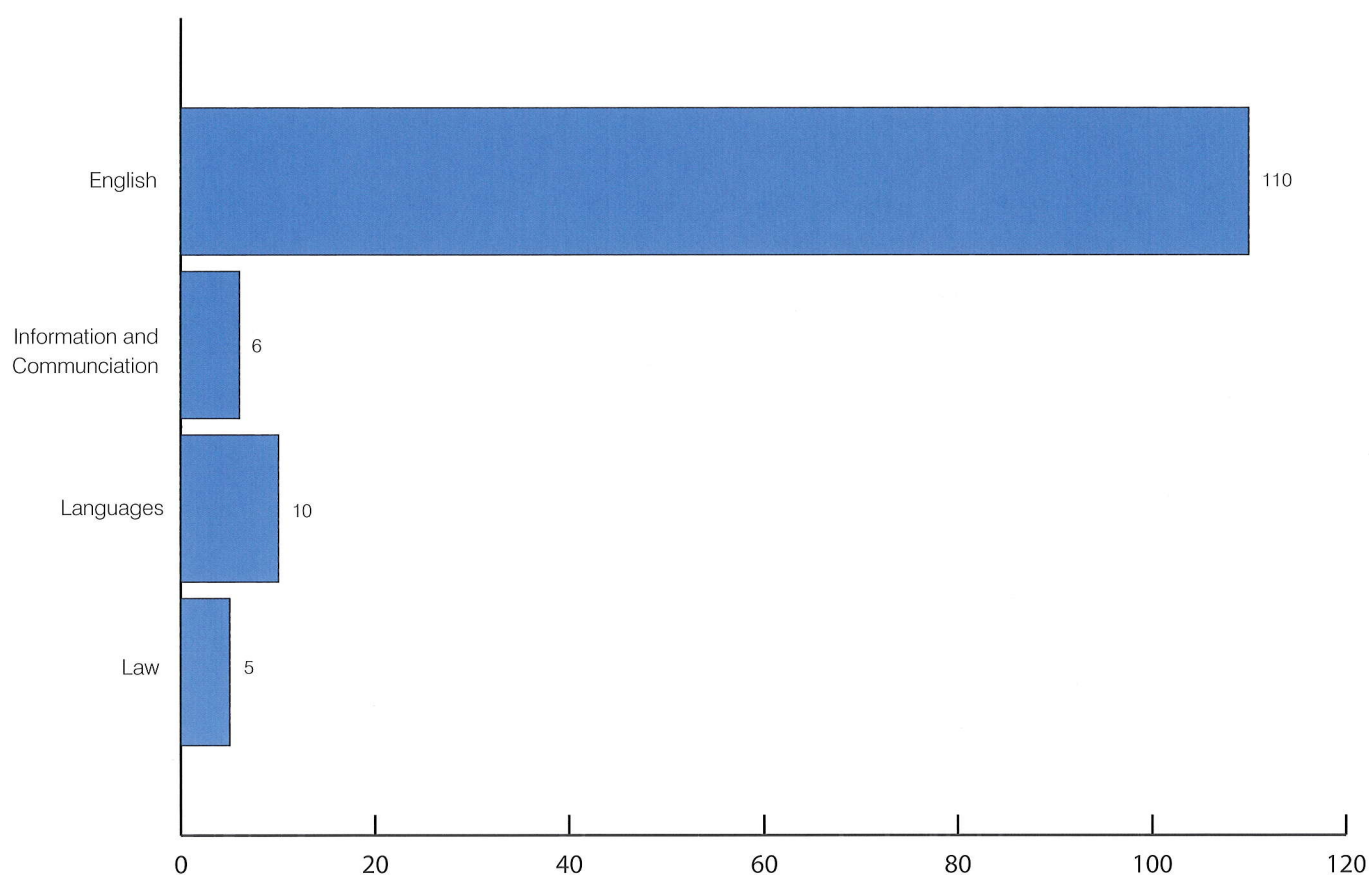


Distribution of mature student information packs within departments in the faculty of Health, Social Care and Education



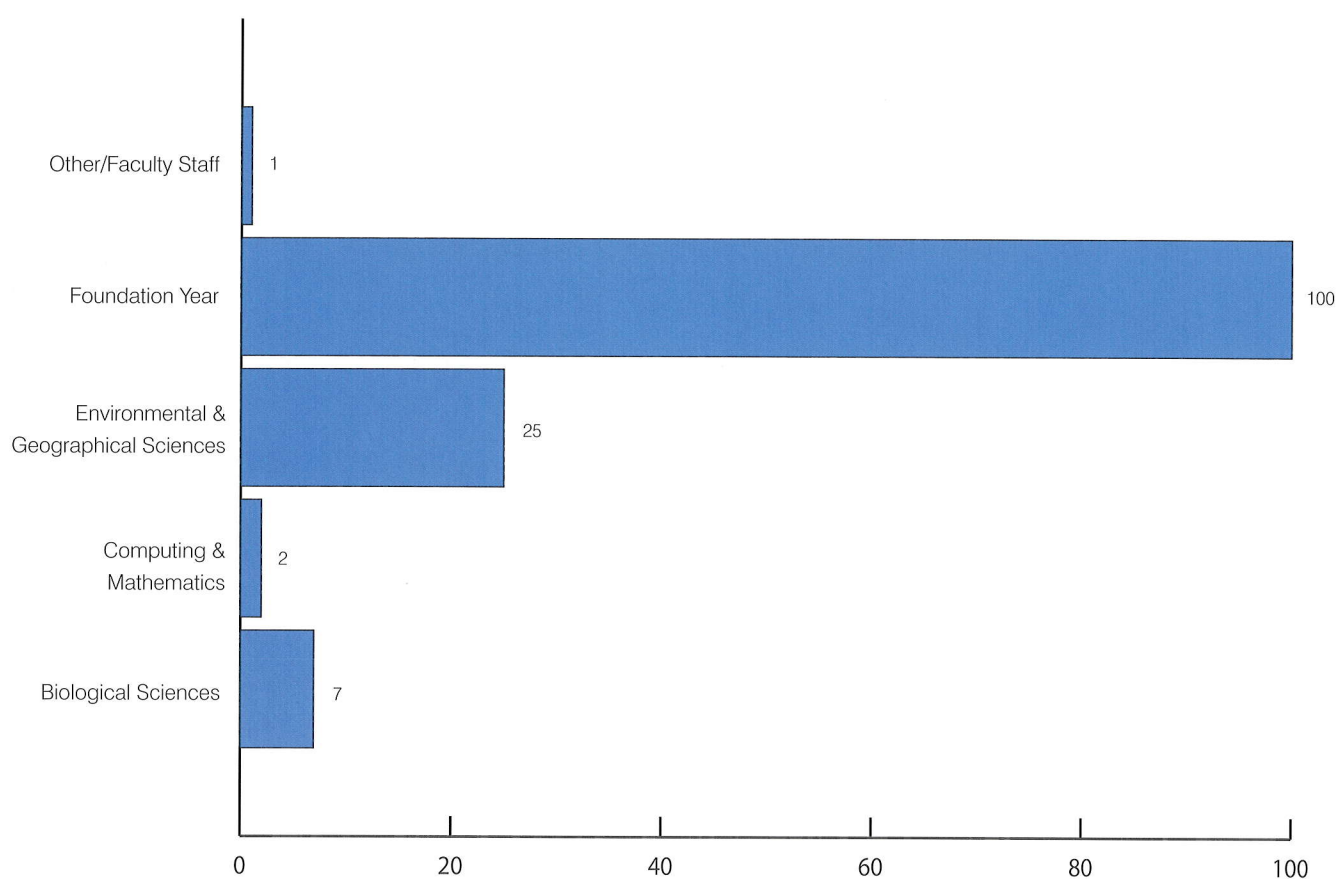
Total Sent: 274

Distribution of mature student information packs within departments in the faculty of Humanities, Law and Social Science



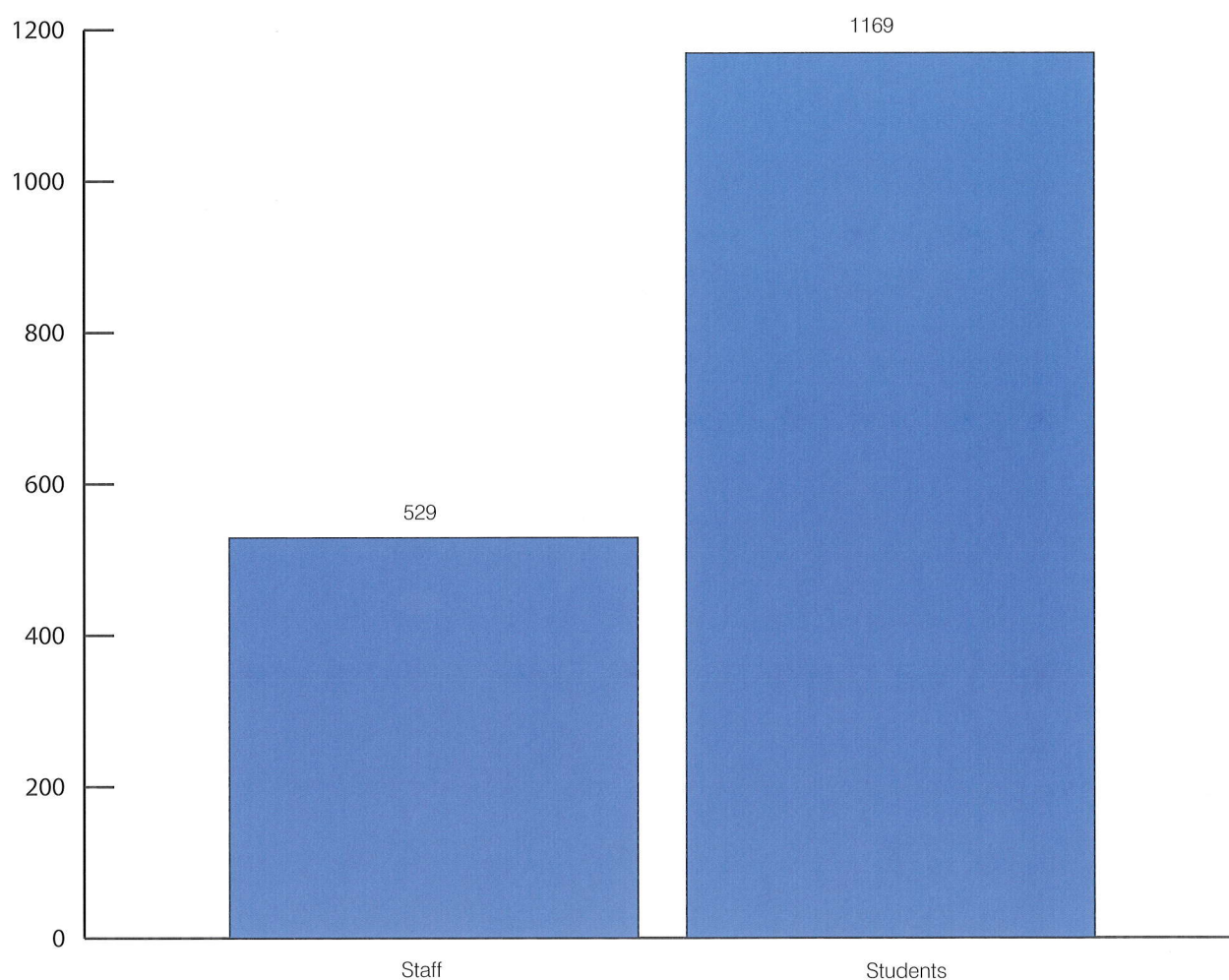
Total Sent: 131

Distribution of mature student information packs within departments in the faculty of Science and Engineering



Total Sent: 135

Distribution of mature student information packs at Manchester and MMU Cheshire

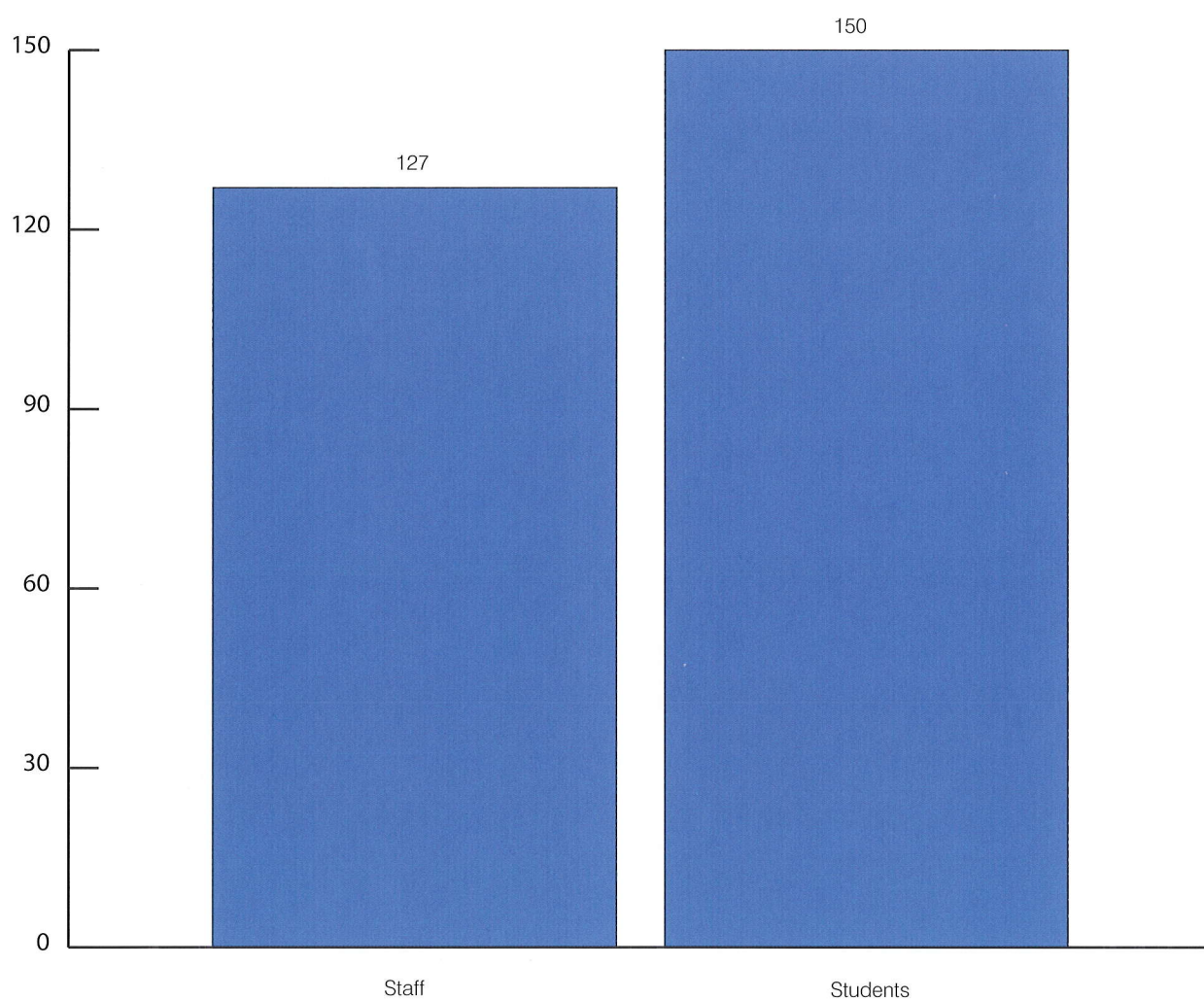


Staff: 529

Students: 1169

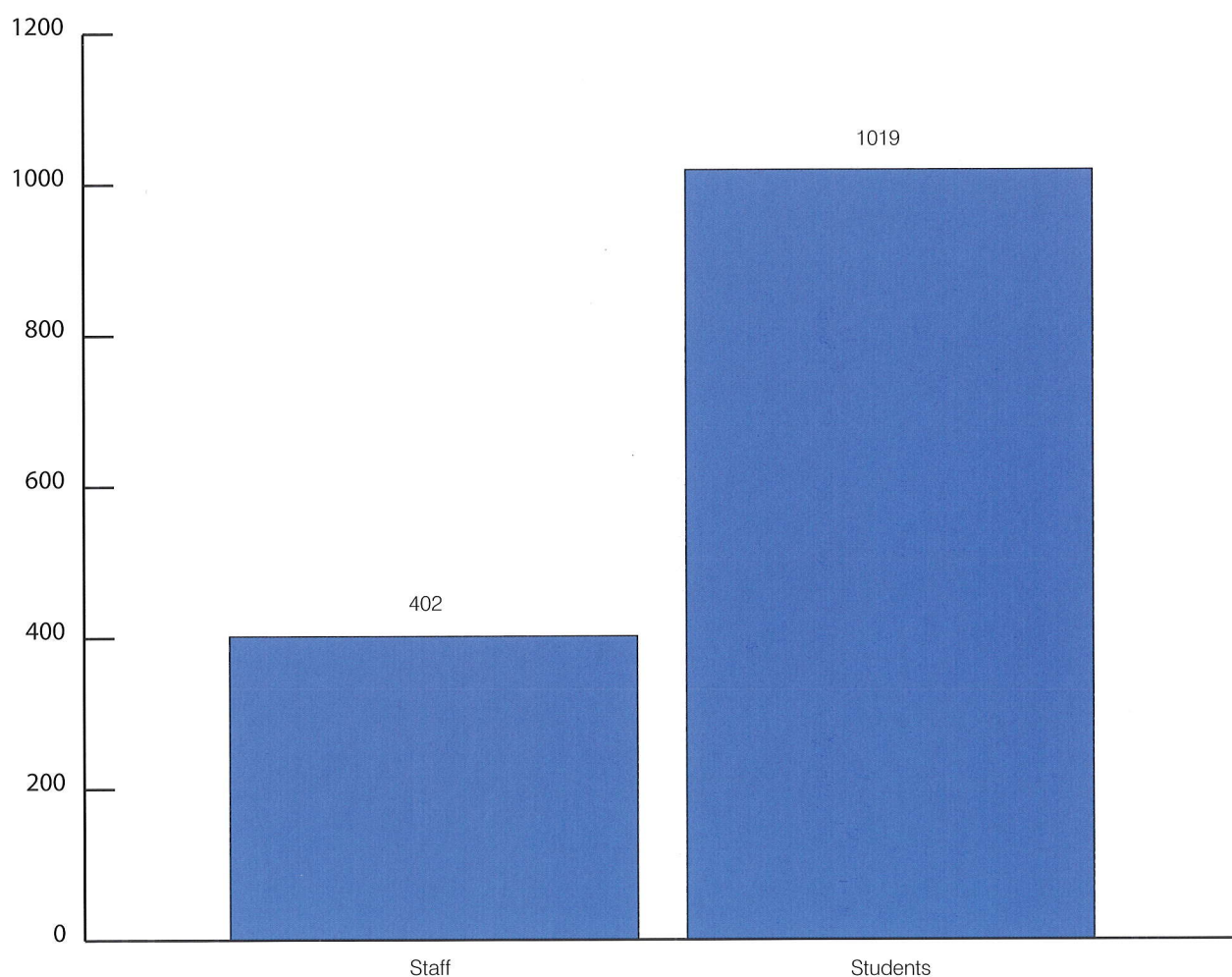
Total Sent: 1698

Distribution of mature student information packs at MMU Cheshire



Staff:	127
Students:	150
Total Sent:	277

Distribution of mature student information packs in Manchester

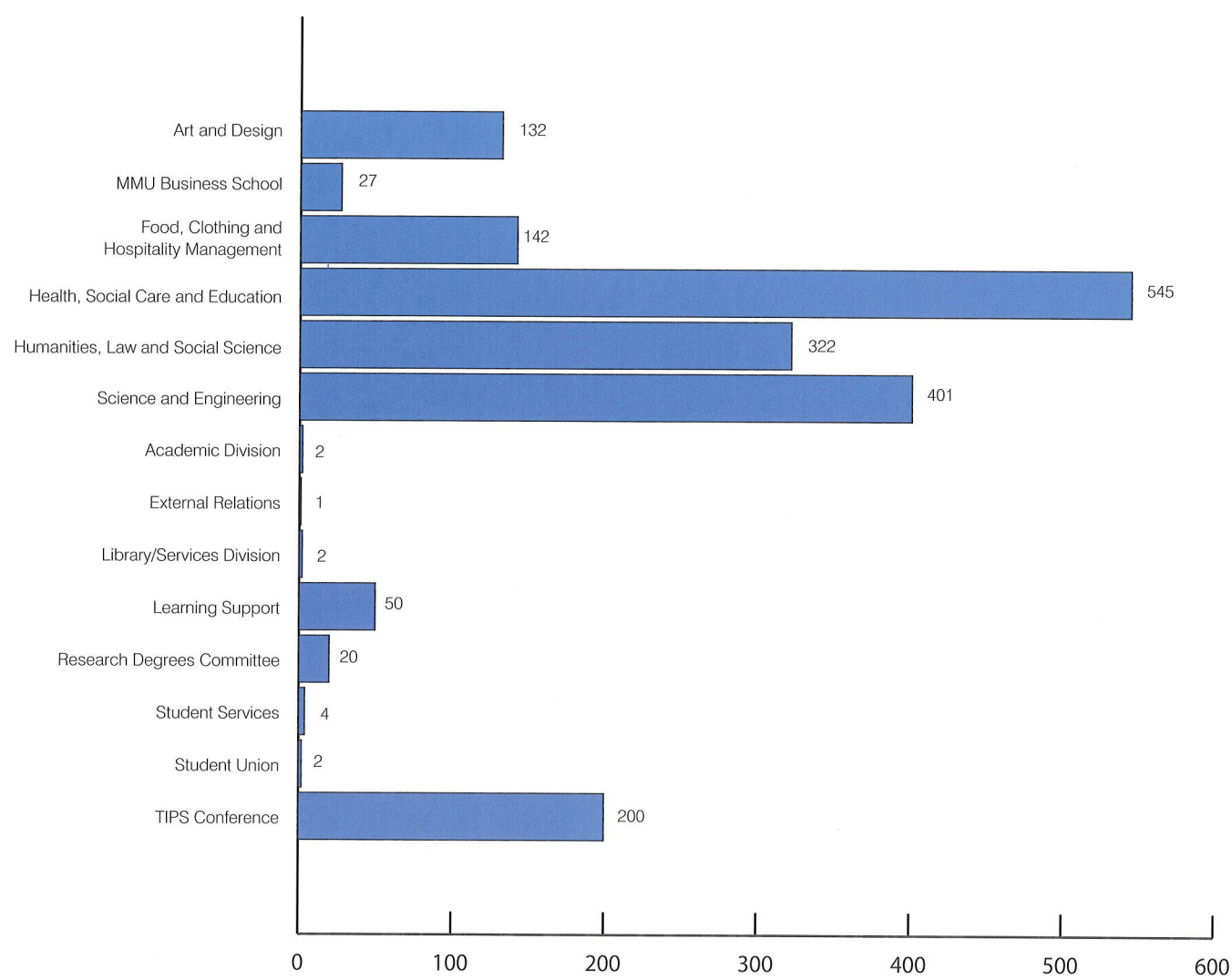


Staff: 402

Students: 1019

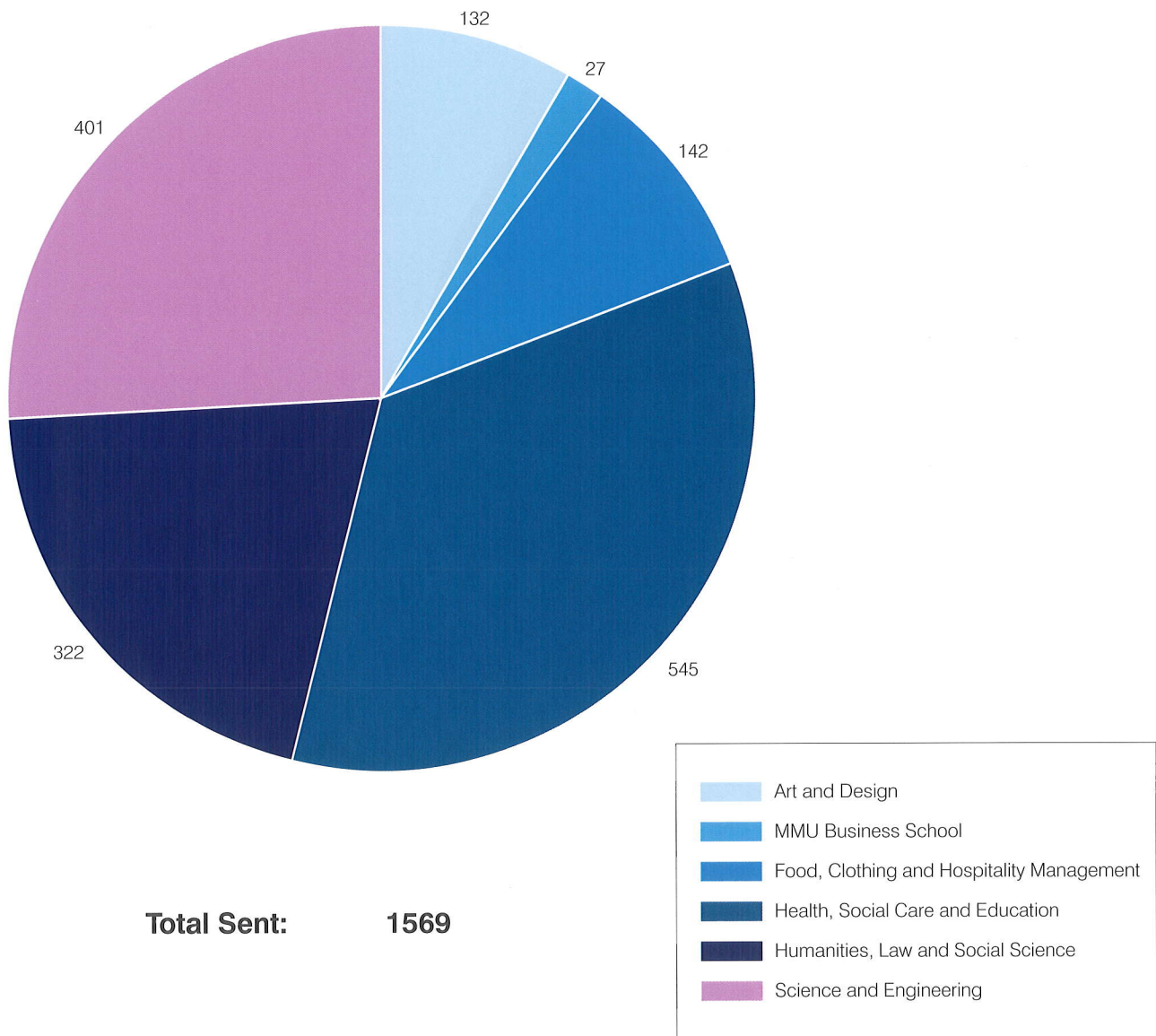
Total Sent: 1421

Distribution of postgraduate information packs in MMU (Manchester)

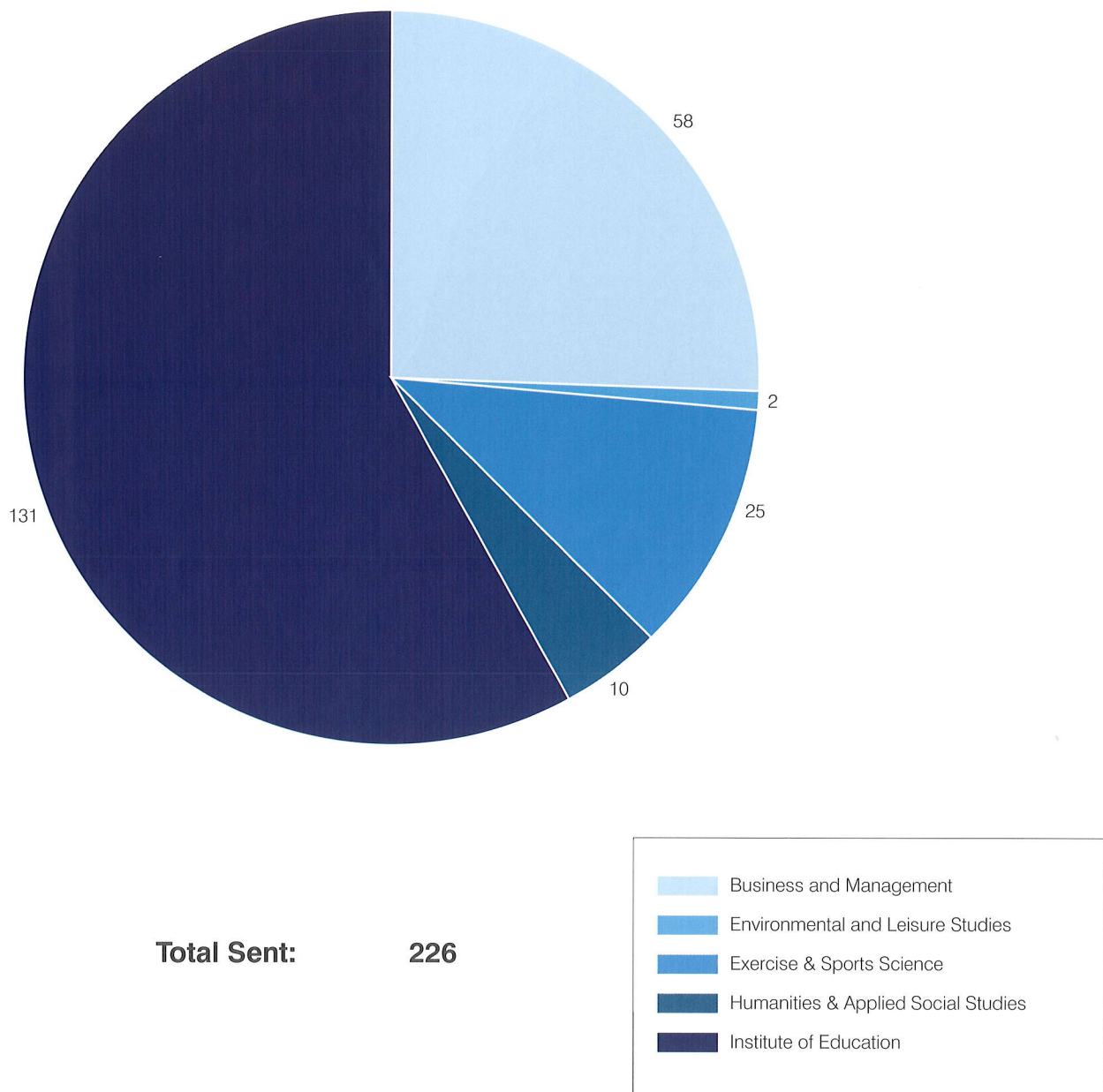


Staff: 242
Students: 1608
Total Sent: 1850

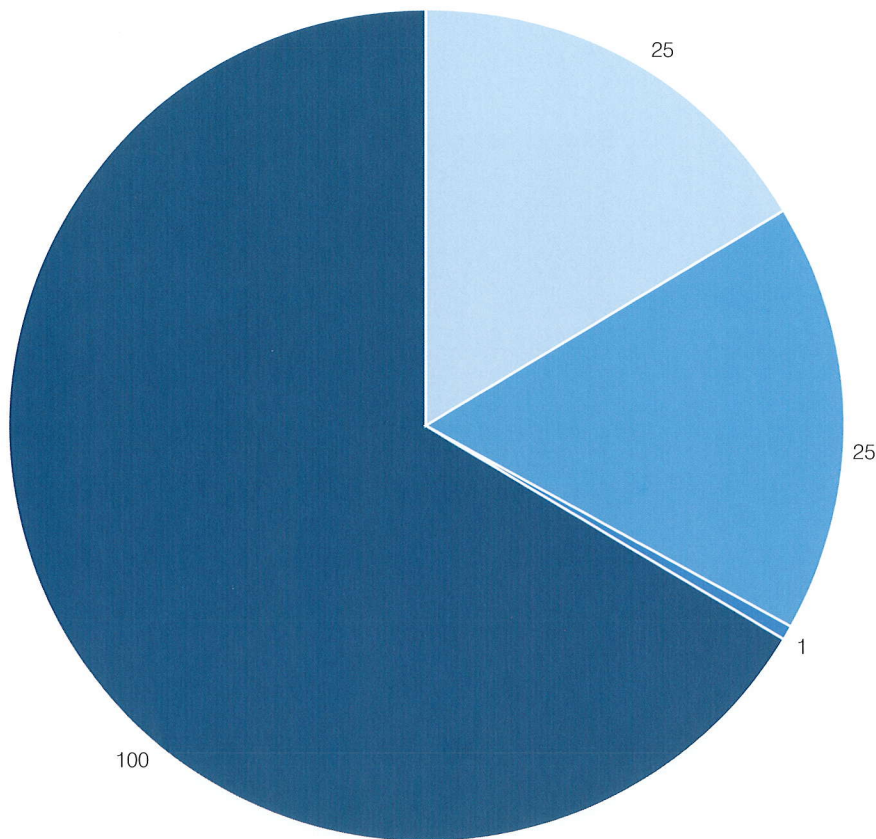
Distribution of postgraduate information packs within each faculty at MMU (Manchester)



Distribution of postgraduate information packs within departments at MMU Cheshire



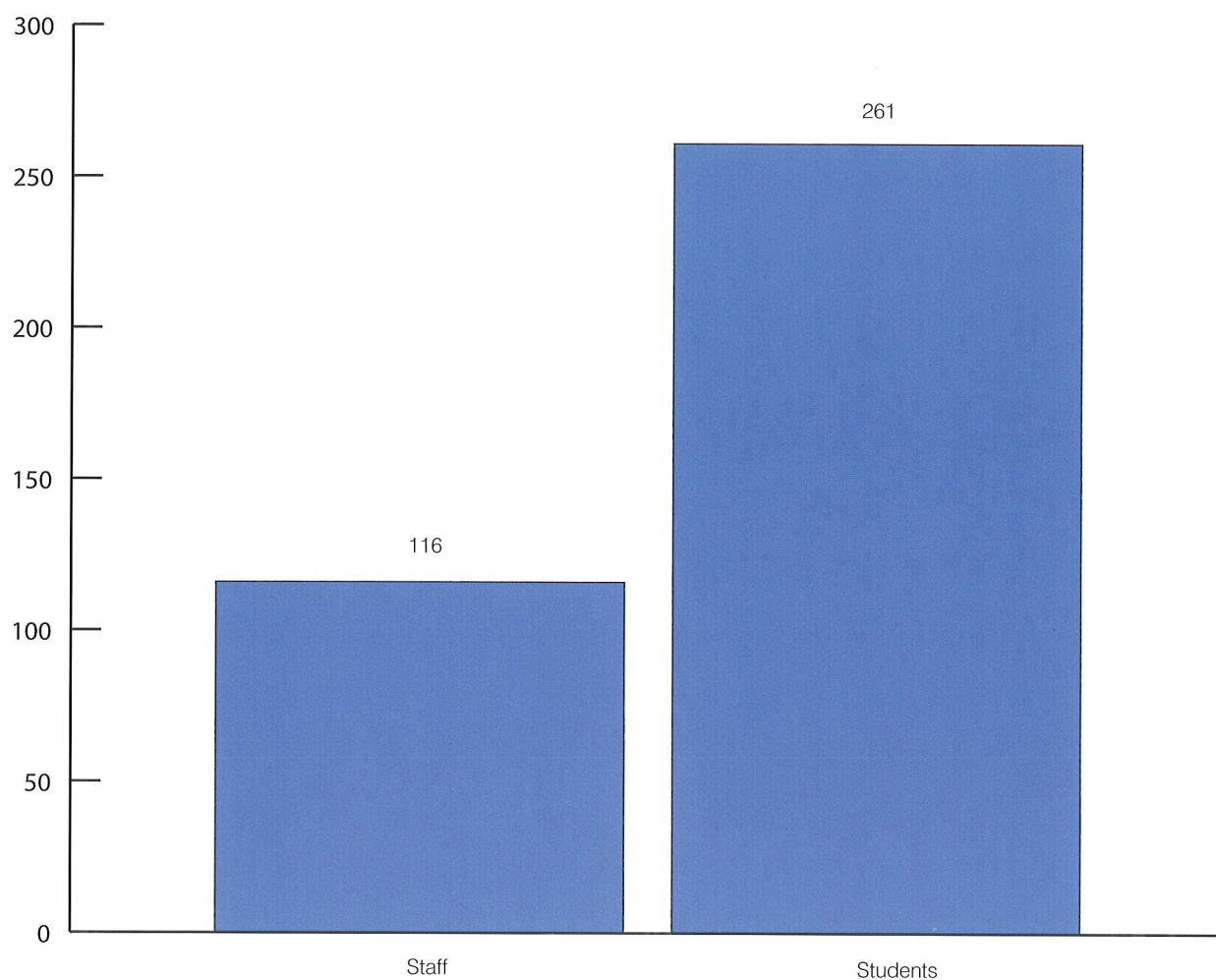
Distribution of postgraduate information packs at MMU Cheshire (excluding departments)



Total Sent: 151

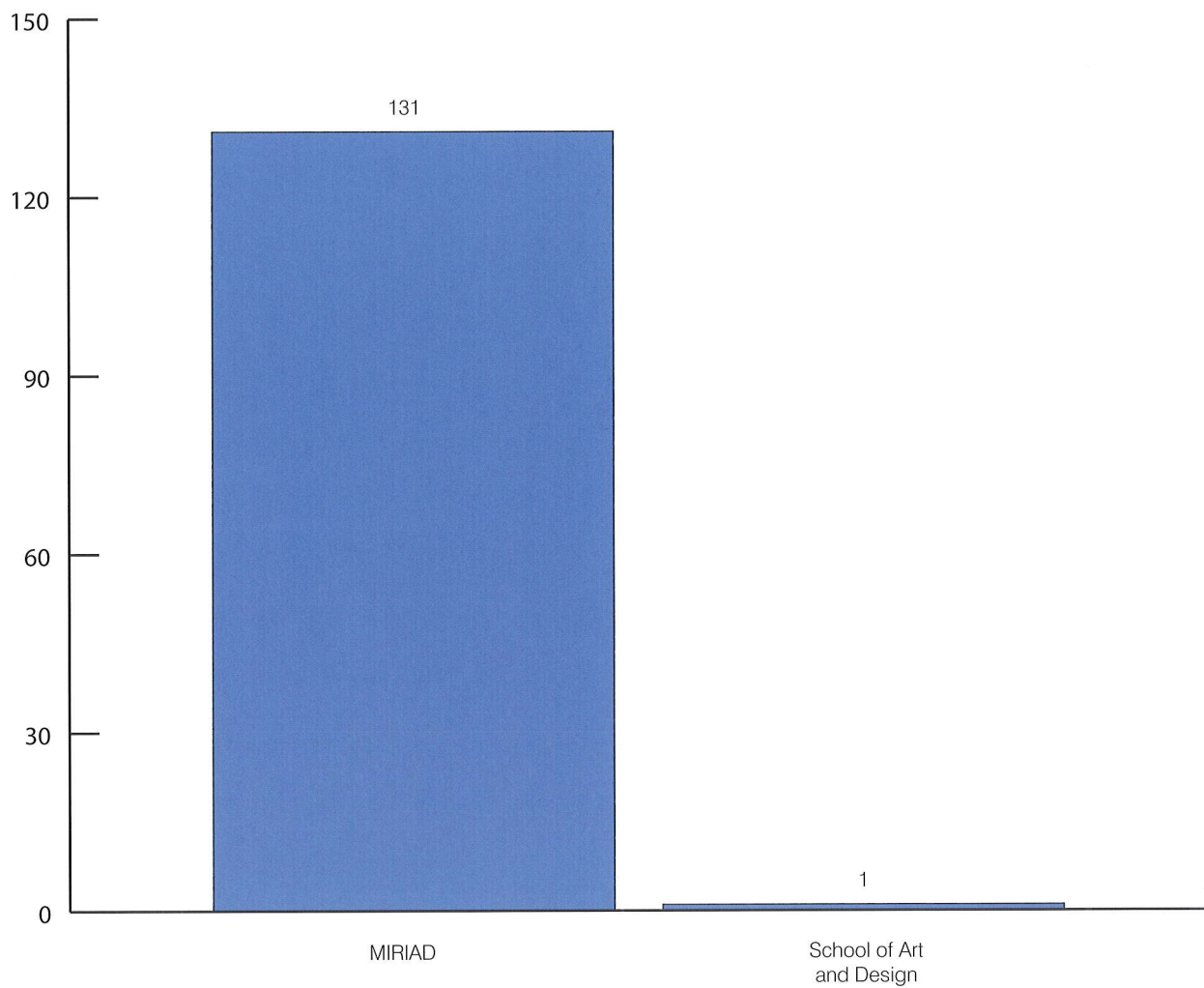
- Academic Division (Guide to PG study only)
- Learning Support
- Library/Services Division
- TIPS Conference

Distribution of postgraduate information packs at MMU Cheshire



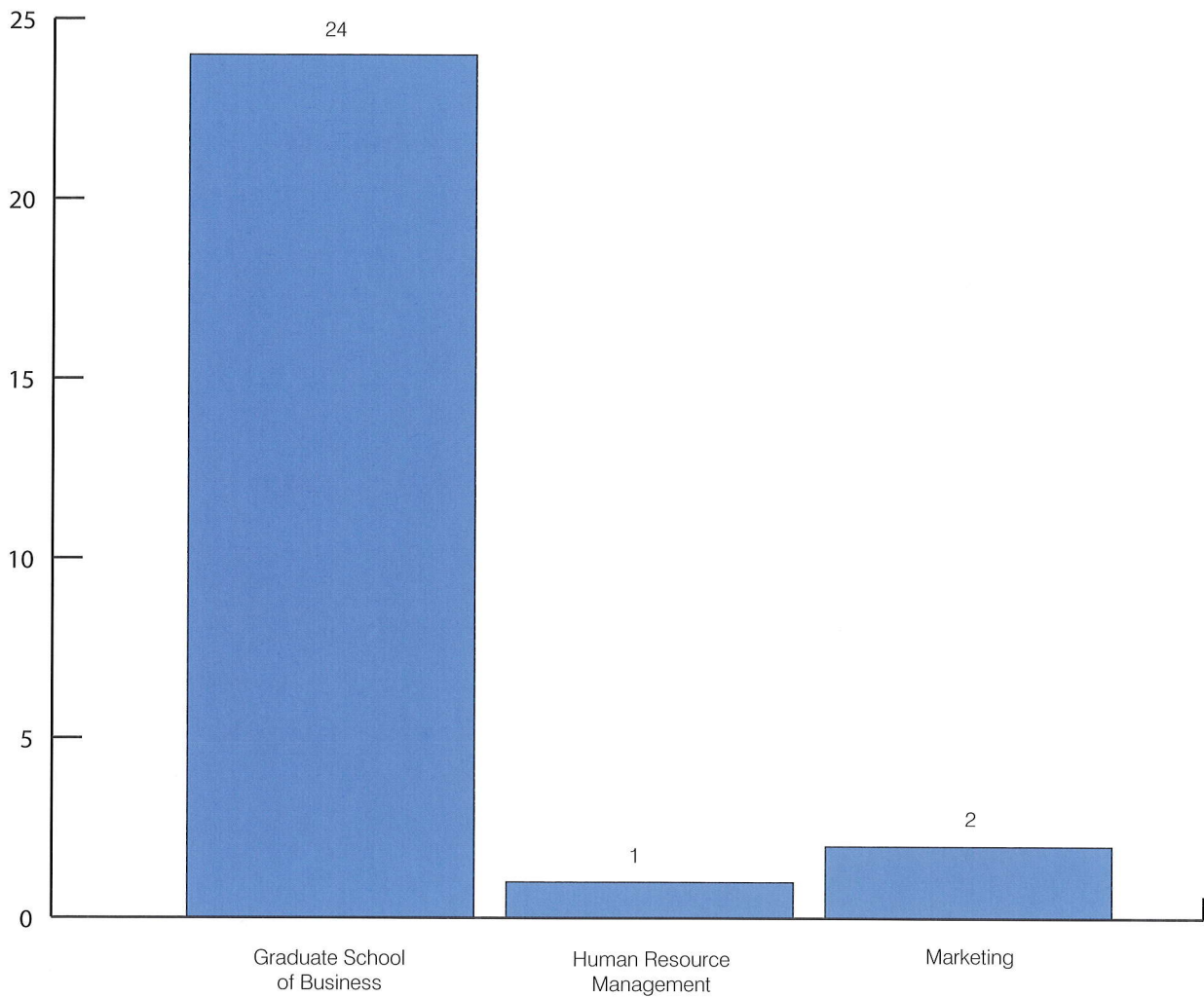
Staff:	116
Students:	261
Total Sent:	377

Distribution of postgraduate information packs within departments in the faculty of Art and Design



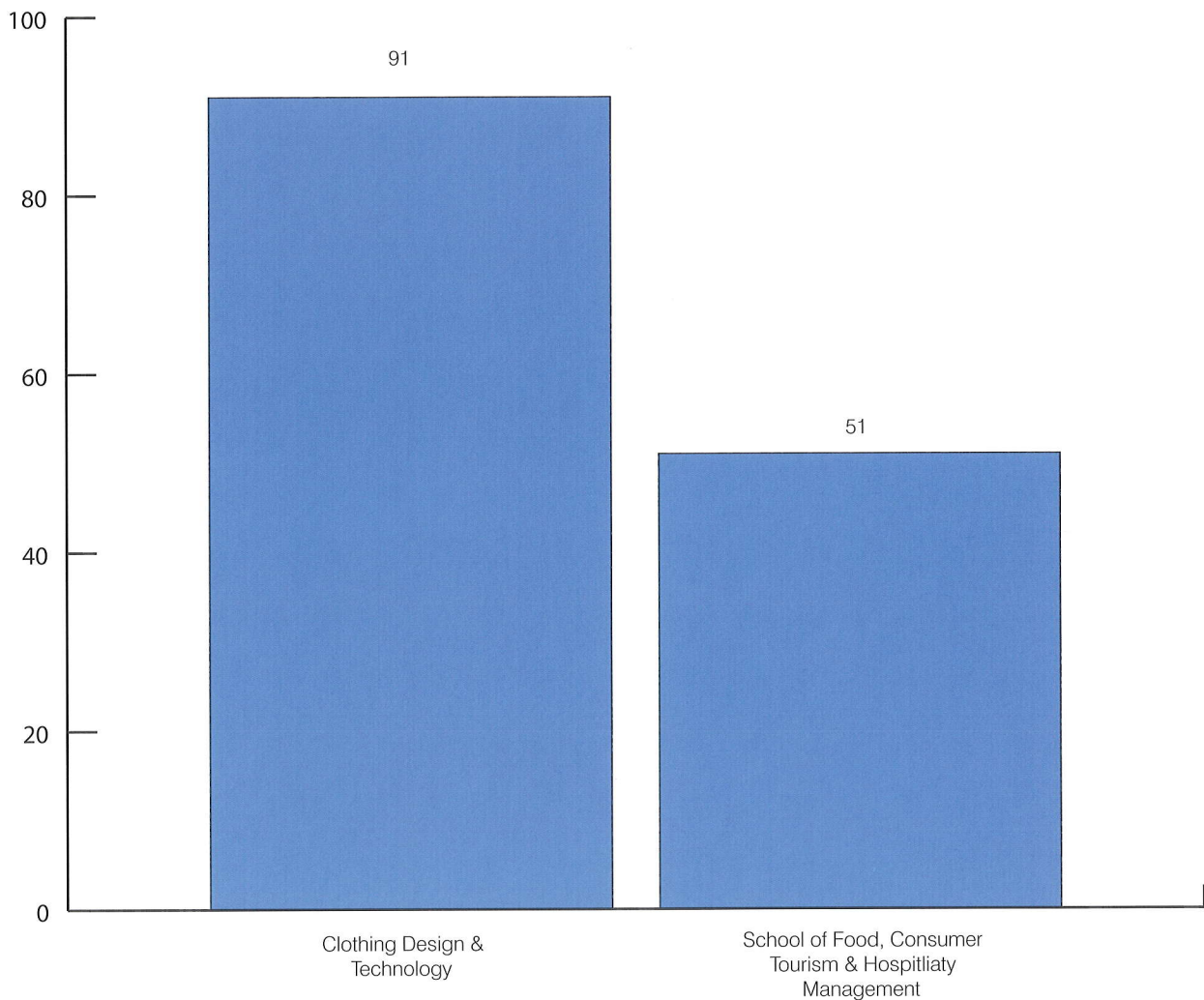
Total Sent: 132

Distribution of postgraduate information packs within departments at the MMU Business School



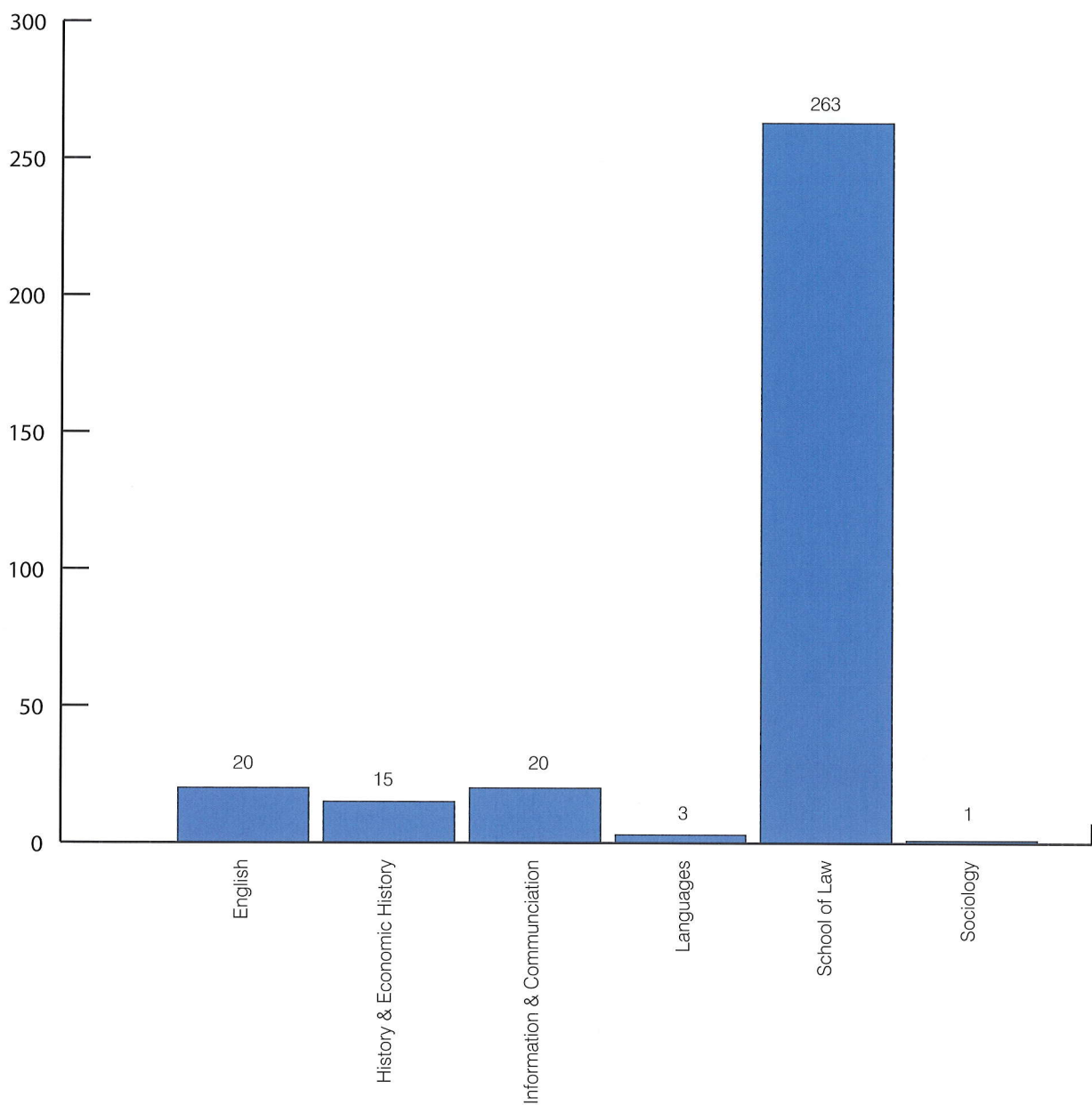
Total Sent: 27

Distribution of postgraduate information packs within departments in the faculty of Food, Clothing, and Hospitality Management



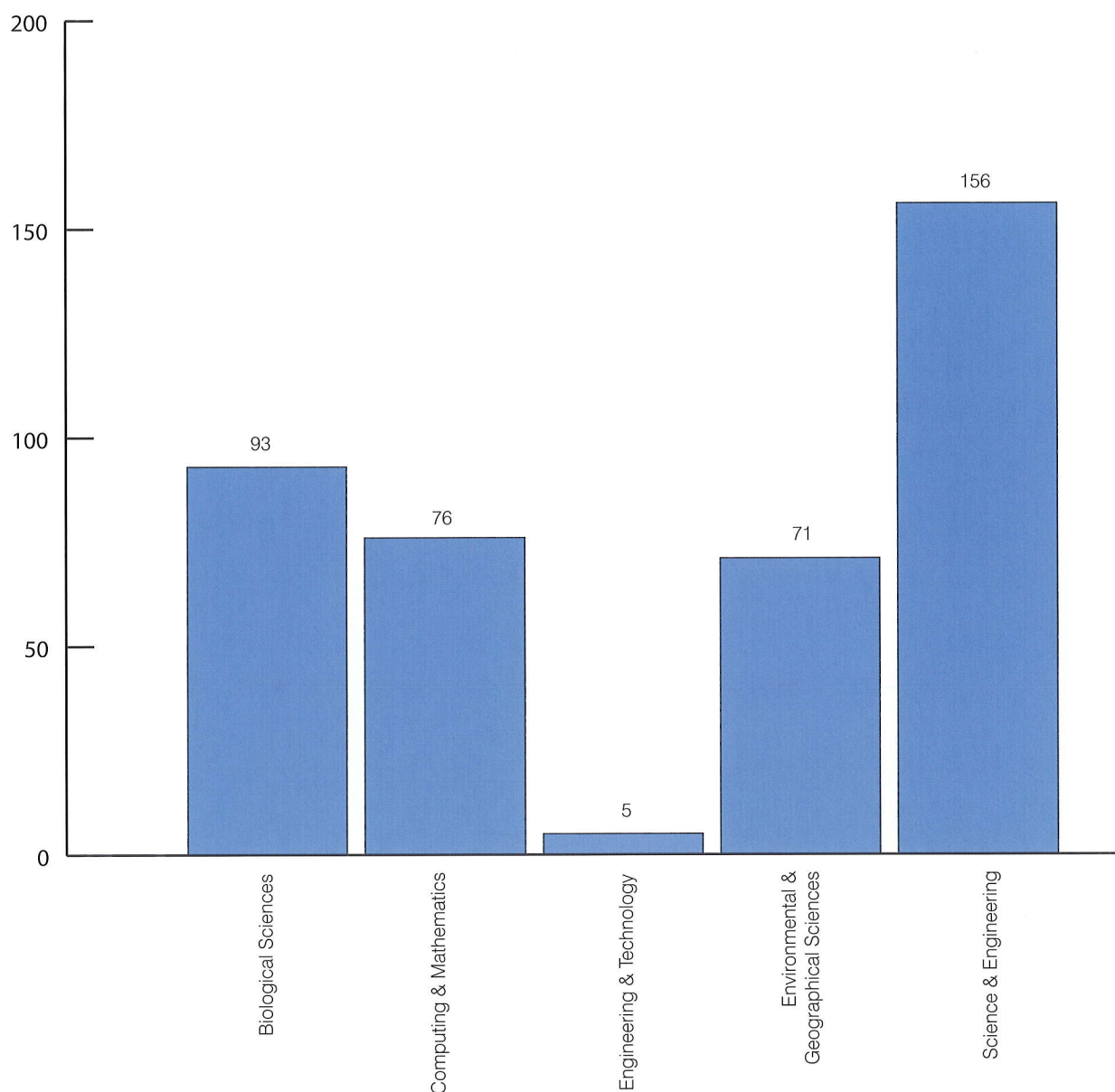
Total Sent: 142

Distribution of postgraduate information packs within departments in the faculty of Health, Social Care and Education



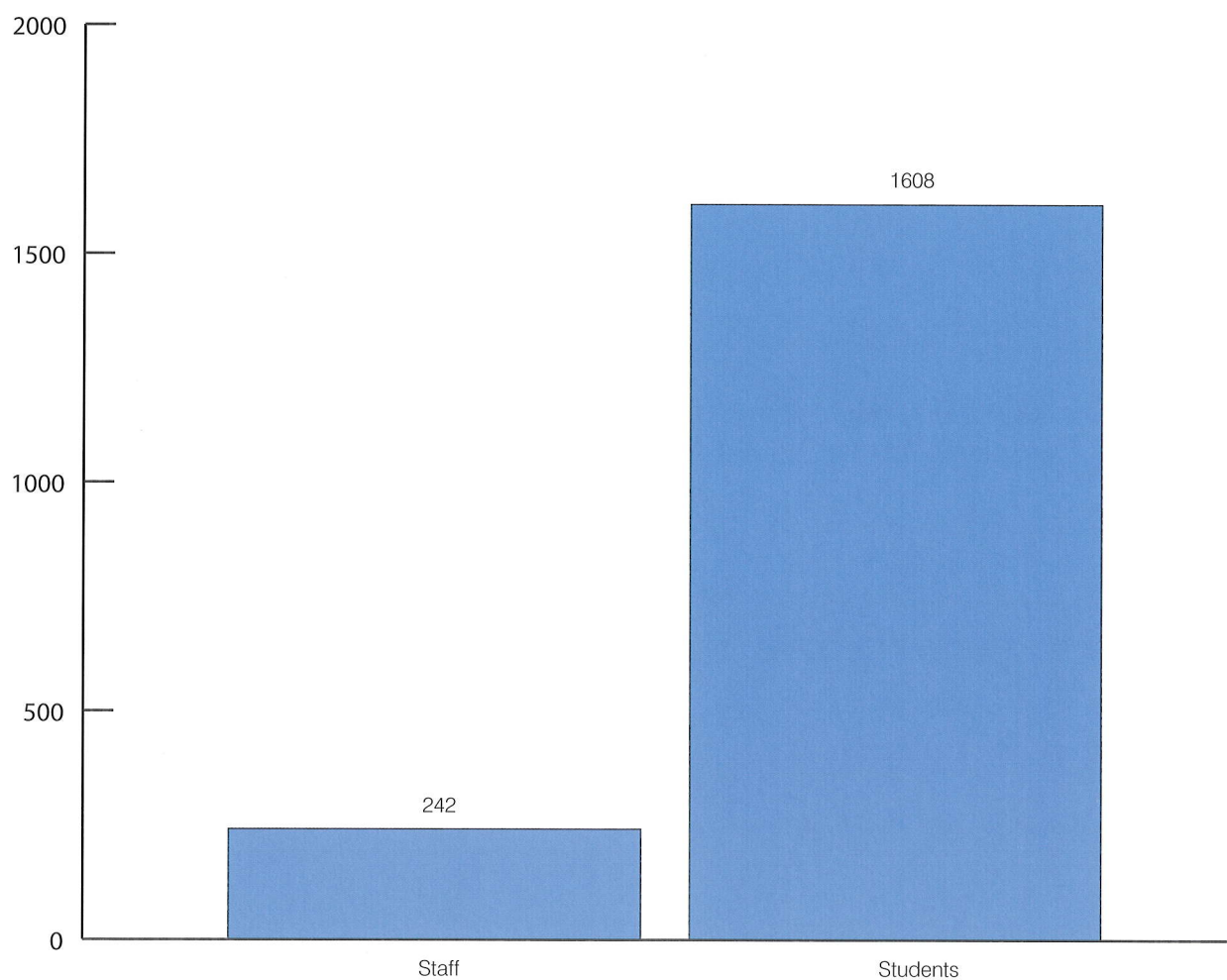
Total Sent: 322

Distribution of postgraduate information packs within departments in the faculty of Science and Engineering



Total Sent: 401

Distribution of postgraduate information packs at MMU (Manchester)



Staff:	242
Students:	1608
Total Sent:	1850

Appendix 0 – Mature Student Information Pack Evaluation Form

The TIPS team are eager to develop and improve the information available for mature students and therefore would welcome any comments you have regarding the content of the pack. Please help us by completing the questions below and returning in the pre-paid envelope provided.

1. Please rate the following materials (tick relevant box)

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Preparing for University	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jargon Buster	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Ends Meet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What information did you find the most useful and what were the reasons for this?

3. What other information would you have wanted included in the pack?

4. Was there any information that you found irrelevant or difficult to understand? (please specify and add comments below)

5. Any other comments on how the pack could be improved?

Appendix P – Postgraduate Information Pack Evaluation Form

The TIPS team are eager to develop and improve the information available for mature students and therefore would welcome any comments you have regarding the content of the pack. Please help us by completing the questions below and returning in the pre-paid envelope provided.

1. Please rate the following materials (tick relevant box)

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Preparing for University	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postgraduate Guide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jargon Buster	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budgeting and money guide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing for University: A mature students' guide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What information did you find the most useful and what were the reasons for this?

3. What other information would you have wanted included in the pack?

4. Was there any information that you found irrelevant or difficult to understand? (please specify and add comments below)

5. Any other comments on how the pack could be improved?

Appendix Q – Exam Workshop Feedback Form

The TIPS team are eager to develop and improve the information available for mature students and therefore would welcome any comments you have regarding the content of the pack. Please help us by completing the questions below and returning in the pre-paid envelope provided.

1.	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
How do you rate the workshop materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How do you rate the workshop presentation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How do you rate the drop-in session?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Which aspects of the workshop did you find most useful?

3. What was your main reason for attending?

4. Were there any aspects of the workshop that you did not find useful?

5. If you have rated any of the above as Poor or Very Poor could you briefly state why?

6. Were there any aspects of the workshop that you would change?

7. Any other comments?

Appendix R – Finance and Budgeting for Non-traditional Students Workshop Feedback Form

1.	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
How do you rate the workshop materials?					
Workshop slides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How do you rate the workshop presentation?					
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How do you rate the workshop facilitators?					
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Is there anything about the materials or presentation you would like changed? Please state why.

3. Are there any additional materials you would like to see included? Please state why.

4. What was your main reason for attending?

5. Which aspects of the workshop did you find most useful?

6. Were there any aspects of the workshop that you did not find useful?

7. If you have rated any of the above as Poor or Very Poor could you briefly state why?

8. If you have rated any of the above as Good or Very Good could you briefly state why?

9. Any other comments?

Appendix S – CV and Covering Letter Workshop Feedback Form

1.	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
How do you rate the workshop materials?					
“Curriculum Vitae and Covering Letters”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
“So you’d like to make an application”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop slides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How do you rate the workshop presentation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How do you rate the workshop facilitator?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is there anything about the materials or presentation you would like changed? Please state why.					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
3. Are there any additional materials you would like to see included? Please state why.					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
4. What was your main reason for attending?					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
5. Which aspects of the workshop did you find most useful?					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
6. Were there any aspects of the workshop that you did not find useful?					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
7. If you have rated any of the above as Poor or Very Poor could you briefly state why?					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
8. If you have rated any of the above as Good or Very Good could you briefly state why?					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
9. Were there any aspects of the workshop that you would change?					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
10. Any other comments?					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					

Appendix T – TIPS Overall Service Questionnaire

TIPS Advice Questionnaire

Personal Details

NAME	
Course	Year
Gender	Age
Ethnic Origin	
Postal Address	
Previous College	
Student Registration Number (MMU Students)	

SECTION 1

If you received advice and guidance, from TIPS, prior to entering university, please complete the section below.
(If not, go to SECTION 2)

1) How was the advice you received, prior to entering university, delivered? tick appropriate box

One to one (individual) advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was this advice given?	
		Face to face	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>
		E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Pre-entry event at MMU in Sept. 03	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Open Day or Visit Day at MMU	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Please specify:

2) Type of support you received / Overall rating of the advice. tick appropriate box/boxes

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
UCAS advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Headstart (study-skills)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General advice and guidance about Higher Education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student financial support advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advice for mature students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-entry workshop at MMU (Sept 03)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify:

3a) If you received any printed materials, please state what?

3b) How useful were any materials that you received?

4) If you are currently in further education, please state name of college.

5) If you are currently at a university, please state which one.

6) How has the support you received, from TIPS, helped you prepare for University?
(Please provide as much detail as possible).

7) Did the support you receive influence your decision to come to Manchester Metropolitan University?
(Please state how).

SECTION 2

On-course advice and support at Manchester Metropolitan University.
(Complete only if you are a student at MMU)

1) How was the support you received delivered?

One to one (individual) advice ☐

Group workshop / presentation ☐

2) Advice and Guidance

Type of support you received / Overall rating of the advice. *tick appropriate box/boxes*

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Mature student advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardship fund advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CV advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course change advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify:

3) Study skills support

Type of support you received / Overall rating of the advice. *tick appropriate box/boxes*

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Time management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plagiarism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referencing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical reading and writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding a brief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Essay writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Note taking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exam revision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exam re-sit drop-in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic IT skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English and grammar support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify:

4) If you have rated any of the above as Poor or Very Poor could you briefly state why?

5) If you have rated any of the above as Very Good or Good, please briefly state why?

6) If you received any printed materials, please state what?

7) How useful were any materials you received?

8) If you received one to one advice, which adviser did you see?
(If you have been advised by more than one, tick each one you have seen).

Karen Duggan

☐

(Telephone 0161 247 2375)

Martin Edwards

☐

(Telephone 0161 247 5394)

Gill Rice

☐

(Telephone 0161 247 2274)

Don't know

☐

9) Give any comments you wish to make about the adviser (please include both positive comments and constructive criticism, remembering to identify the adviser if you have ticked that you have been advised by more than one).

10) Did the support you received, by TIPS, have an impact on whether you remained at University?

Yes

☐

No

☐

(Please state how, adding any comments)

11) How many times have you used the services provided by TIPS?

12) Overall, how useful has the TIPS advice and guidance been to you? (Please comment)

13) If you were referred to another service by TIPS, please name the service or organisation and comment on how useful it has been to you.

continued

SECTION 3

1) How did you first hear about TIPS?

Talk at Induction ☐

Business card ☐

Flyer ☐

Poster ☐

Referral from another service ☐

Lecturer / tutor ☐

All student e-mail ☐

Electronic board in reception area ☐

Word of mouth ☐

Other, please specify:

Please state which service _____

2) Were you made aware that TIPS is a confidential service? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please add any comments you wish to make regarding this.

3) Any other comments? (e.g. suggested improvements to the service)

4) Would you be prepared to be contacted to take part in further evaluation of the service provided by TIPS?

Taking part in a focus group Yes ☐ No ☐

Being interviewed Yes ☐ No ☐

Being featured in publicity Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to this information being used to evaluate the TIPS project

Signature

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix U – TIPS Symposium Programme

9.15 – 9.40	Registration and Refreshments
9.40 – 9.50	Welcome Sybil Lavin, Chair (Director, North West Post-16 Network)
9.50 – 10.40	<i>'Transition, Induction & Progression Strategies (TIPS).'</i> Karen Duggan, TIPS Project Manager, MMU
10.40 – 11.00	<i>TIPS For A Headstart – Study Skills In Preparation For HE.</i> Heather Pollitt, Aimhigher Greater Manchester Project Manager, Headstart.
11.00–11.30	Break / Refreshments
11.30 – 11.50	<i>'TIPS & Learning Support...Successful Collaborative Working-A Case Study.'</i> Linda Horbury and Trish Richards, Learning Support, Student Services, MMU
11.50 – 12.10	<i>'The Library's Information Skills Programme and TIPS: Getting It Right For Our Students.'</i> Jackie Murtagh, Senior Assistant Librarian, Electronic Services Development Team, MMU
12.10 – 12.30	<i>'Financial TIPS and Conflicts Of Interest.'</i> Patricia Joyce, Student Financial Support Officer, Student Registry, MMU
12.30 – 12.45	Question & Answer Session
12.45 – 1.45	Lunch
1.45 – 2.15	Terry Caffrey (Bridgewater Hall Residential Poet)
2.15 – 2.45	<i>'A 'Holistic' Approach To Support For Learning'</i> Kate Kirk, Senior Learning & Teaching Fellow Presented By Kimberley Osivwemu, Applied Community Studies, MMU
2.45 – 3.15	Break/Refreshments
3.15 – 3.40	<i>'A New Look At 'Old' Issues. Responding To Needs Of Mature Students In Higher Education.'</i> Gill Rice, TIPS Personal Advisor, MMU
3.40 – 4.00	<i>'Voices From The Ground.'</i> Student Experiences.
4.00 – 4.30	Question and Answer Session with the TIPS team

Appendix V – Questions & Answers Arising From TIPS Symposium – 2nd December 2004

Karen Duggan's Presentation

Q: When were the students assigned advisors? And how many? Were they paid? And what was their caseload?

Answer KD: We started with a team of three but by June we had lost a member of the team. Our workload was intense seeing students, holding over a hundred and twenty workshops and sessions. It involved a lot of collaborative work with the other university departments and we added value to existing support. We were multi tasking until August.

Q: We have sites on different campuses and find we encounter difficulties and mixed co-operation from faculties around the university. Do you also find similar resistance at different levels?

Answer KD: We sometimes experienced resistance. That's why the force field analysis will prove useful. As our practice was over such a short academic period we were able to respond to and embrace many departments.

But if I am to be transparent then yes, lots of practitioners thought we were stepping on their toes. I don't like using the word holistic but as we did give say, career advice and support then that was interpreted as taking expertise away from people – if that is how they saw it. Other staff thought our project was fantastic and saw it as adding value to an already existing service. You always experience resistance from all places. But as widening participation is on everyone's agenda and most institutions have got widening participation strategies then it really is up to members of staff to buy into it.

Comment – Sheila Aynsley-Smith – I just want to say before people start to disappear that the achievements are in front of you. I'd like to thank Karen for her drive and commitment and the team she has around her – and you will hear from Gill later. For me it was a dream come true and I am grateful for what you and your team have done and the fantastic legacy that TIPS have left behind.

Q: I'd like to discuss the proactive side of your work. We are also a small team and I wonder how you managed being a small team too how did you focus on proactive side? We find when a student comes with about eight problems sometimes there just isn't the time to deal with them all.

Answer KD: The most difficult part of being a small team and having such a massive task to do you really rely on other support services. It really is a two way traffic as they supported us, we supported them and in doing so we were able to share expertise and learning knowledge. As you will hear from two speakers from the Learning Support Unit, from Trish Richards and Linda Horbury who will discuss case studies that will show how we shared and valued each other, it really is the key to success. Such practice helped us move from a reactive state to a proactive state and vice versa. We were constantly reflecting on our practice by supporting a unit that was really struggling and being reactive to try and get them into a proactive state too.

So, what we would do is stop and reevaluate and get ourselves back in to a proactive state. That was probably the most difficult part of the work but if we want to give students more than their allocated one hour or 20 minute slot we need to protect ourselves and needs as practitioners and take out an afternoon to reflect on practice and critically evaluate what works and what doesn't.

But yes, I do agree with you it is difficult when you are such a small team to keep proactive all the time.

I say a team of three but the reality is we were a team of 45 excellent practitioners and we tapped into their support as much as they tapped into ours.

It was collaborative support and team working at its best and the more we work together the better support we can give to our students.

Q: How many students did you see each day?

Answer KD: Depends it really was different everyday. Some days we would see students back to back, other days two of us would do one-to-one consultations while the other would do a workshop.

And it all depended on what part of the academic year we were in. During the exam period for example, we had a very structured timetable and carried out one to ones and workshops right across the sector. We never turned a student away and no student waited more than a week to be seen.

Some came in desperate states. homeless, no where to go, running out of time to get their Hardship Applications in.

Sometimes we had administration tasks to do but we just downed tools if a student needed to be seen – they were the priority. Otherwise it wouldn't have been true to the academic ethos of being responsive to always prioritise students – it did get manic at times but there were gaps. Lulls and storms that's the best way to describe it.

Q: You've indicated earlier of a high percentage of females accessed the service but males did not access the one to one service. Do you have any plans to follow through those males and pursue any problems they may have, from an individual and community perspective working collaboratively outside the university?

Answer KD: We recognised that a lot of females were accessing the service so for those males who didn't want to come to one to one support we made sure that support through information was made available like information on literature stands etc...

As the project has now ended we have made the information available electronically so that support staff can access materials for their students. Whether students are coming to MMU or not, many students in or out of the city will have the same questions and concerns so the information on the website is for wider use.

I do feel that intervention is crucial at the right level and at the right time.

We have supported an awful lot of students in mentoring projects, e.g. Barnados, to help certain groups to get back into education.

Library Presentation

Q: Do you think this type of service is more effective if embedded rather than dealt with by separate bodies?

Answer Jackie Murtagh: An awful lot of research has been done with library information in regard to embedding and I've read a lot into this subject myself.

I do remember a group of speech pathology students working on a presentation I thought that was brilliant and could really see the value in doing it. As an outsider I was just observing them and talking to the students but they told me they so resented having to do this work because they were speech pathology students and they couldn't see the value. They had real trouble seeing the benefit in developing skills in communication skills.

It's a tricky area for any library skills to use and be aware of using the info skills service and embedding them and that means collaborating with academics and that's where it gets tricky.

Additional comment from Tricia Richards: Can I just say that study skills as well as information must be embedded. I've been working with the Humanities Department to help them embed study skills and this fits in well with PDP and trying to work with other departments. It's a staff development initiative too.

Comment: Lecturer – This seems to be a meeting to say farewell to TIPS. It's sad to hear of its finish after the university prides itself on being at the forefront of widening participation, yet it has allowed this project to finish. Why? Also the second part of my comment concerns retention. How is student retention addressed when the Student Support staff are so understaffed and under resourced? How can MMU let it happen?

Sheila Aynsley-Smith responds: With European Social Funding or indeed any outside funding you can never be sure that you can proceed on that basis, you always hope that you can sustain the project but there didn't seem to be an appropriate strand to continue the project. There is at least a legacy there and Gillian Rice is transferring from TIPS to become a Student Services advisor in Learning Support Unit. I'm as sorry as anyone else that it's not continuing. But that's the nature of the beast.

Q: How do you make the students to be aware of the services you offer? After we did a survey 40% students answered that they weren't aware of the services we provided.

Answer Jackie Murtagh: This is a subject I obsess about! I think the library service is guilty of thinking that they have a captive audience – 'we are the library, people have to come to us for their books etc...' But it's just not like that. We have to behave differently than that so we don't then run the risk of getting marginalised.

So we produce promotional material like newsletters and continue to target and provide relevant material for students. There is a definite need to communicate the message constantly, to think of fresh ideas, to understand the pressure students are under, we should think of the real benefits libraries have to offer.

Finance Presentation

Q: How many staff do you have to help? At what age does Access funding stop?

Answer Patricia Joyce: There is no age limit for access to learning finance. We have a team of four, two do general administration and two are busy looking at Access applications we get on average 3,000 a year. We haven't got the time to give financial advice so that falls on the Students Union and TIPS covered it too.

However, the Government are keen for us to promote and give more budgeting advice especially in view of financial changes in 2006.

Mature students come with a whole raft of problems whereas younger students present problems associated with blowing their grant and need to be shown how to budget more effectively.

Q: Due to an increase in numbers of students who come in and go home, that is who don't live on campus e.g. mature students is there a strategy in place for them to be supported?

Answer KD: Yes. That is exactly what TIPS did. We tried to respond to students needs and ensure that the same help is available to mature students. We provided twilight sessions so that we could listen to what they needed and wanted.

They have just as much right to support and to staff to respond to them even if they're not 'mainstream' i.e. on campus.

Additional comment from Tricia Richards – We are lucky at MMU in that lots of local students attend the university and continue to live at home.

Karen, Gill, Linda & I are all mature students. However, no matter how much support staff try to give students in addition I always encourage them to support each other – their own student cohorts. I urge them to make their own informal networks and join up with each other.

End of Morning Session

Comment: Student Information Centre – I would like to say thanks to TIPS, and how refreshing it was to refer to Gillian Rice and Karen Duggan. The way Gillian Rice handled students was so well done she was always very enthusiastic. Thank you.

Comment – gave thanks and stated that it's a shame that the project has come to an end. He thinks it should be universal.

Q: Libraries, MMU –On the subject of action research can you talk us through how Open Days worked?

Answer Gill Rice: Students would identify issues and concerns throughout the day I would make a note of them and talk them through individually or in a (TIPS) team situation on how to address the problems. Just hearing the students' voices helped us to address how we could help or bring about a change to meet their needs.

After an event I would reflect on the topics of the day and what the students had been saying to us.

Answer KD: Gill specialised in building a programme for mature students. Talks with them helped to shape what information went in the information packs. Pastoral support was built on that, using key features to specially target support for mature students.

Q: As a Further Education institution we want to prepare students to go into Higher Education yet there are still some gaps in student support. IT skills for example are something that needs to be looked at.

Answer KD: The more we looked at this area the more we could see that there is a huge gap in the transitional stage from GCSE to Further Education.

Comment: Lecturer – You can see the sense in this project and the strength of what it adds of what you do in terms of social support, grants and money advice, emotional support, providing a sense of belonging and providing face to face contact. A successful project is reciprocal; you get a sense of belonging back. Student support staff need to provide a service to support staff emotionally and to help provide a sense of belonging; Higher Education won't be inclusive without it.

Answer KD: As a Community Psychologist I agree, support at the individual level...but at many other levels there is no change.

Q: Is the report going to the Directorate at MMU?

Answer KD: Yes and to all colleges in Greater Manchester.

Appendix W – Event Evaluation Form

Please help us to evaluate how successfully we have disseminated the TIPS project by completing this questionnaire, indicating how satisfied you were with our performance in each area (by circling the appropriate number, using the scale 1:5) and by writing in the text boxes.

Event Title: **TIPS Symposium**

Venue: **Lancashire County Cricket Club**

Name:

Job Title:

Organisation:

E-mail:

How satisfied were you:

Very
satisfied

Very
dissatisfied

With the organisation of the event?

1 2 3 4 5

With the venue and facilities?

1 2 3 4 5

With the relevance of the topic areas?

1 2 3 4 5

That the presentations were stimulating?

1 2 3 4 5

That the pace of the event was challenging and sustained?

1 2 3 4 5

That the event was informative?

1 2 3 4 5

With the handouts and materials?

1 2 3 4 5

If you were not satisfied with any aspect, please indicate the reason:

What is your overall assessment of today's event?

Please circle appropriately

Very Good 1 2 3 4 5 Very Poor

What were the main strengths of the event?

What were the main weaknesses of the event?

Do you have any comments about TIPS as a service that you may want to be included in practitioner feedback?

How will you use the information you have gained today?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this Evaluation Form.

Appendix X – TIPS Symposium Evaluation

Total number of completed forms = 67

1 How satisfied were you with:

	Very satisfied				Very dissatisfied
	1	2	3	4	5
the organisation of the event?	55	11	1	0	0
Percentages =	82.09	16.42	1.49	0.00	0.00
the venue and facilities?	53	12	1	1	0
Percentages =	79.10	17.91	1.49	1.49	0.00
the relevance of the topic area?	54	12	1		0
Percentages =	80.60	17.91	1.49	0.00	0.00
that the presentations & activities were stimulating?	30	33	3	1	0
Percentages =	44.78	49.25	4.48	1.49	0.00
that the pace of the event was challenging & sustained?	31	33	1	2	0
Percentages =	46.27	49.25	1.49	2.99	0.00
that the event was informative	40	22	4	1	0
Percentages =	59.70	32.84	5.97	1.49	0.00
With the handouts and materials	41	22	2	2	0
(excellent) (3)Percentages =	61.19	32.84	2.99	2.99	0.00

What is your overall assessment of today's conference?

	Very Good				Very Poor
	1	2	3	4	5
(very good indeed)	35	30	1	1	0
Percentages =	52.24	44.78	1.49	1.49	0.00

If you were not satisfied with any aspect, please indicate the reason:

"Could have had a group work session, but all useful and stimulating."

"Though I was satisfied with all the speakers, one or two were somewhat disappointing in that they lacked passion."

"I was disappointed with the 'holistic approach' presentation; neither a practical account of how to do it, nor a strategic overview."

"Very vague, not even given a window to ask concrete questions as I could not work out what it was supposed to be about."

"A little too much sustained lecturing – more interactivity needed."

"One speaker didn't tie up her presentation with the work of the TIPS project."

"Post poet talk was slightly vague and 'semi-detached'."

"Because people were leaving early and the student's presentations left until the end, this had the structural effect of silencing the student voice, but it was good that Salma redressed this partially through her input in the morning."

"Very satisfied with all aspects, except NO puddings."

"Had to leave early."

"Enjoyed all presentations but maybe a workshop discussion group could have been included to encourage more interaction."

"Some of the presentations were extremely informative on a professional, and gave me some excellent ideas, but one or two of

the presentations were less so."

"I know the timing and length of the event were dictated by the amount of info to pack in, however I was disappointed that the session on mature students was so late on, I had to miss it due to childcare commitments – the school run."

"This form needs an evaluation spot for each presentation as they were all different, see back page."

"Just this evaluation form; no space to comment on individual presentations."

"Following lunch the noise from the kitchen was fairly intrusive."

"Particularly liked the lectures from Karen Duggan and Jackie Murtagh, found some lectures less informative – less well presented, didn't receive programme/directions."

"Vegetarians poorly catered for, no confirmation registration received."

"I would have liked more information before the event, i.e. time, directions etc., I received nothing except an email."

"It is difficult to comment fully as I was only able to attend the afternoon session."

"I did not receive confirmation of info to the event initially, I had to contact the organisers for this info, however, once the organisers were aware I was dealt with very promptly and all my needs were met."

"Very difficult to present another person's paper, 2.15 – 2.45 session, slow boring presentation"

Main strengths of the event:

"Informative in a complex area."

"Thank you very much for all your hard work, best learning event in a long time."

"Interesting; very practical points made by presenters."

"The food was delicious; the work of the TIPS team was portrayed clearly and in an interesting way. It was a pleasant environment and well organised, the POET was very entertaining."

"Range of speakers, helped to understand wider context – different viewpoints of project."

"Entertaining, especially the poet."

"Relaxed atmosphere."

"Confidence and breadth of knowledge of all the speakers."

"The information given and the knowledge of the presenters was excellent. The event was on nice informal level which benefited everybody."

"Very informative, buzzing and helpful."

"Good examples of how to integrate student support with departments and how to disseminate and organise this, excellent examples of good practice."

"The sharing of valuable information and such interesting projects, the networking."

"The main information was informative and practical."

"Access to information on site; friendly atmosphere, excellent speakers, resources available."

"The quality of the information and ideas."

"I learnt a bit more about what to expect if I went to UNI. I have now decided to enrol and take the access course for social work – I Loved the Poet."

"Resources made available – Jackie Murtagh's presentation."

"Knowing more about the service; very organised and well presented."

"Very hardworking team, all working together."

"Sharing of good practice, the results supporting and articulating the success of TIPS project."

"High quality presentations and variety – well timed."

"Adequate comfort breaks – entertaining after lunch speaker."

"Brought together a range of issues which have continuing relevance to our speakers and my post."

"Lots; interest, relevance and pace – learning how TIPS has worked with other support services to enhance student confidence and experience – very useful."

"Clear delivery of all the presentations – being able to see slides and hear/Speak. Student experiences and voices."

"Really liked the series of short presentations in the 2nd half of the morning session – kept my interest and concentration going."

"The width of information delivered in a positive way to maintain interest throughout the day."

"Information sharing – well organised."

"Extremely well organised and thought through topics, all very interesting and the way it was planned met needs of delegates. Very good supporting materials and opportunities to talk to other delegates – Really enjoyed energiser – the Poet."

"Passion, knowledge, experience, and commitment to student support issues of the students."

"The morning session as a whole was rich with information and experiences – the presentation by Gill Rice is excellent and reflects a real issue."

"Exploration and discussion issues concerning students."

"Diverse presentations and presenters."

"Very good organisation and delivery – nice buffet – POET was fantastic, a fantastic raising aspirations tool".

"Showed areas of good practice that were practical and transferable to different situations and institutions – the examples given as handouts."

"Excellent overview of the project supported by good illustrative presentations on individual aspects."

"Strengths were the delivery of information by breaking down the components of TIPS i.e. the speakers from various departments enabled me to build a better picture."

"The opportunity to ask questions throughout the programme."

"The timekeeping."

"Collaborative aspects of all the topic areas. The principal and approach with respect for the students, delivering of support to allow students to manage their own learning."

"Information based on experience well balanced. I enjoy learning/being given information – POET session extremely entertaining and a welcome break."

"Directly relevant to retention and achievement."

"Everybody seemed extremely hardworking, caring and enthusiastic."

"Enthusiasm, facts and the POET"

"Contents and handout – after lunch session."

"The range and variety of people involved – L.S. and Library in particular stimulating presentations".

"Interesting, and information with lots of follow up materials – websites etc. to be used."

"Relevant to my own area of work."

"The talks were very informative and the speakers were enthusiastic about their topics. It is also beneficial to be able to compare different institutions and the projects/strategies implemented."

"Enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by all."

"Gave a good overview of the support mechanisms available for students in schools/colleges and MMU."

"Some very good pointers for good practice, some very stimulating presentations, was a very good idea to have Terry Caffrey immediately following lunch."

"How the project has been integrated into the other departments in the university and how the philosophy of the approach is being embedded into the organisation."

"Lots of very interesting and useful information shared with the audience."

"The speakers."

"I found the Headstart presentation particularly interesting and informative. The main strength was that the presentations were short, and concise, and to the point."

"Terry Caffrey was AWESOME – extremely innovative for a conference."

"Good range of speakers bring in different areas of interest – The POET was great."

"Clear Focus – Great approach to the after lunch 'graveyard' slot."

"Very clear focus on how a specific WP project can/should link with mainstream support services."

"Good handouts, venue, excellent food, would have liked rice or jacket potato – blew the diet today."

"Excellent handouts, interesting overview of projects."

"Opportunity to network, some ideas, useful to see how a more holistic model can work and particularly how services worked and collaborated together to the benefit of students."

"I enjoyed the library talk it was very informative and useful. Emphasised the importance of our links and the library."

"Lectures by Karen Duggan and Jackie Murtagh were well presented and found them interesting and stimulating."

"Pace, variety and sharing good practice."

"Library and finance presentations – Jackie's presentation was excellent, she was self questioning whereas the other speakers had been self congratulatory and her presentation style kept my attention throughout."

"The whole event is a main strength – What a shame such a successful project should come to an end, and the main factor for myself was the financial TIPS and library information."

"Very relative to my area of work."

"Dissemination of good practice, Jackie, library talk and Karen talk both excellent."

"Philosophy behind the event, sharing good practice is to be applauded."

"Variety of experts speaking."

"Information communicated."

"Focus of the event, no topic not relevant."

"Terry 'Wordsworth' GREAT."

What were the main weaknesses?

"Disappointed that the initiative has been terminated."

"How we could embed at little cost! The TIPS approach, too much presentation – group work would have been useful"

"More specific dates i.e. comparisons with pre-TIPS retention and also growth in particular areas/decline."

"There were no outstanding weaknesses of the event."

"It's the end of TIPS – only fully understanding all aspects of the project now it has come to an end."

"There were no main weaknesses, it was a well run event."

"Female dominated."

"Only the lack of audience participation – I realise that the form of a symposium is a lecture but..."

"None – OK perhaps there was one – instructions address for the event – a note that the entrance to LCCC is on Talbot road would have been helpful (perhaps it was there and I missed it)."

"The venue – sometimes presentations disturbed by catering staff/people collecting their bags when leaving early – The pillars in the room made it difficult to see at times. Would have needed a separate room re noise."

"Really looked forward to hearing from students – pity some comments came at the end when some people had left – not a weakness just a pity."

"Also, WHERE were the senior staff from MMU?."

"Not enough discussion time."

"At the back of the hall there must be a kitchen as I sitting at the back kept hearing the noises of pans and the conversation of chefs."

"Over reliance on lecture format."

"It may have been useful to hear from the students earlier in the day so as to relate their thoughts on education/the university experience as a whole to TIPS/Learner support."

"Needed to be informed how MMU intend to keep the TIPS Learning support project alive for the benefit of students, particularly with those very little experience of university."

"Repetitive nature of some sessions, perhaps some interactive sessions would have been helpful, though information giving a priority."

"Not enough material/information on subject topics before the event."

"Some presentations a little flat."

"Sadly promoting a service that isn't going to exist any more."

"A lot of information in one go! The presentations were similar in style with little space between them – maybe too many speakers."

"Difficult to put forward own comments when such a large group."

"The question must be asked why is TIPS not continuing to build on its proven success. Why close it?."

"Some presentations were quite dry."

"Not all of the talks were relevant, Perhaps offering the talks as seminars so that delegates could attend the ones suitable and find out more about specific areas."

"The breaks and lunch were bit too long. The day could have been shorter."

"Some speakers could have given more practical examples of how TIPS changed working practice, rather than examples of existing best practice."

"Perhaps a bit one-dimensional in focus on presentations/Q&A Sessions, Workshops to share practice and expertise in different institutions might have been interesting."

"Cold room (ish); sparkling water was a miss."

"Not of the event just of newsletter sent to parents talking about their 'Child' as a mother, children are younger than 12/13."

"Some of the presentations were too dry and too peppered with information that we didn't need to know."

"I was unsure of the context of the holistic approaches to learning presentation."

"Kimberley Osivemu; a very poor presentation. I do not know where the work done by Kate Kirk was. The handout and spoken context rarely coincided."

"The Holistic approach to learning talk was rather poorly presented and by the end I wasn't really any more informed."

"I couldn't understand the point of Kimberley presenting when she didn't tell us anything, what was it about?"

"The powerpoint didn't work for the first speaker in the afternoon (Holistic approach), so the introduction to this was confusing and I didn't follow the focus, was there one?."

"Too long, could have been compressed to a shorter period."

"Main objective – what are we really taking away from the event? What can people take from the successes of TIPS and utilise?."

"Powerpoint presentations – unimaginative – Jackie Murtagh by far the best."

Comments about TIPS as a service which you may wish to include in practitioner feedback:

"How important it is that TIPS actually adds value to the support that involved schools – not sure of the Holistic approach really addressed this as clearly as I had hoped. Why are all the presenters/developers female?? Is there an issue generally with regard to attracting males – especially white working class male's."

"I would just like to say that I admire the TIPS team for all their hard work."

"Informative service with a more personal touch. Will be missed as a collaborative /supplementary service to the work of Learning Support."

"I would have benefited from this kind of support whilst I was at University."

"They are clear and concise with their aims and offer a wide range of support for all students in all aspects of life."

"Thank you for all your help – we will try to carry on the good work."

"Fantastic service, will obviously be greatly missed."

"Excellent dissemination of good practice. Anything similar in Yorkshire?."

"An excellent showcase for a holistic centred approach to retention and achievement."

"Needs more funding."

"TIPS should be sustained by MMU. It's quite obvious that the activities should be sustained."

"I believe this organisation should be continuous as a lot of support and advice (which was essential) was given. The workers must be very considerate people with a lot of care to provide such a service."

"It would be better for you/Tips service to mail every single student to know where you base on/what you do. As an ex-student I meet with your team in my 3rd year so I think if I know you from my first year of Uni I could do more better."

"I work as part of the PALS team at Bolton College. I find that the work we do is very similar to that of TIPS but we are a permanent post at the college."

"I have worked with the TIPS team over the last year but it was only at the Conference that the scope and real value of the project was fully explored and explained. It was a humbling experience to realise the work that Karen/Gill and the team have done."

"Yes, TIPS greatly enhanced the work of Learning Support and we will feel the loss of the project keenly. We intend to mainstream some of the projects we have worked on with TIPS collaboratively."

"Fantastic support from the project team and a difficult time for our team. Thanks Karen and Gill for everything – support, sharing expertise and resources and friendship."

"I would like an opportunity to look at the report before answering this."

"A fantastic service and staff that will be greatly missed."

"Shame TIPS wasn't granted further funding – Great project."

"TIPS has so much to teach us working in the library, I have come away from this day with pure gems of ideas that I will try to make work in my working life, the energy, vision and commitment of the TIPS teams is incredibly inspiring only wish TIPS was to become mainstream service within MMU."

"It is a terrible shame that it isn't there anymore."

"TIPS needs to continue."

"Methodology and procedures excellent."

"Community involvement/outreach I think would have strengthened the 'transition' aspect."

"This was a very relevant and worthwhile service, surprising that it will not be continuing i.e. funded by MMU itself."

"An excellent research project that puts students at the forefront. Will take all the information and knowledge I have gained from this to make students more aware of it."

"There didn't appear to be senior management support through representation at this event. Cross College services nearly always get 2nd class acknowledgement."

"For a care leaver going to University, TIPS is exactly the support they would need to stay and succeed. What a huge pity it will be no more."

"Think that Student Support Services such as Learning Support, Financial Advice, Student Advice, Pastoral Support are all essential."

"Services that should be maintained developed and increased."

"I can comment that the TIPS project is refereed to by myself

constantly as an example of good practice from an HEI.

Government targets are to see 50% of school leavers in HE or working at level 4 by 2010. TIPS is going to be more essential year on year. It is a project which MMU should consider funding, I am sure that AIMHIGHER would be supportive of this."

"TIPS seem to have been an excellent project. It's a shame that funding has ceased. I hope its principles will continue to be used."

"We use the TIPS folders for our mature undergraduate students and hope this information will be still available to us. We would be happy to complete an evaluation of the usefulness of the pack to the students for you."

"The TIPS service, particularly Martin Edwards, proved a valuable resource to the students at South Cheshire College."

"The cultural awareness is a major issue and on course English is an excellent idea."

"It is such a shame that it is not continuing. Perhaps we need some support for traditional entry students – Recently diversity within our subject has affected our traditional students in a negative way, lacking confidence."

"Think that it serves to support a number of the students that I teach. Now I am more aware of the needs of different students, and aware of the services that are available."

"Thank you for being responsive to previous feedback."

"We've had some recent discussion in our dept regarding the worry that our traditional entry students (also need support) are becoming increasingly intimidated by mature students (with the increase percentage in widening participation. I would like to argue for support for any students (almost compulsory for some areas e.g. study skills, exam prep, IT and then for all who want it for other areas (but also appreciate we have to target vulnerable areas))."

"You all seem really dedicated, enthusiastic, and bubbly, unlike most people in HE; Don't lose it you're an inspiration."

How will you use the information you have gained today?

"Will be taking back some good ideas which could contribute to practice at my institution. Particularly liked the oil the wheels rather than reinvent the wheel approach, Will hope to encourage action research in this area."

"Some ideas that can be discussed with school reps who are responsible for support/retention."

"Point of reference for student queries and MMU. Knowledge of similar/relevant services elsewhere, good practice."

"To enter HE knowing there is help out there for me and I am not an island."

"I will continue to use it in my work."

"To mirror issues and strengths discussed with retention work at BCC."

"Feedback to line manager – my project will soon extend over whole of Barnsley College. I need to organise how to do this effectively."

"Share both with Student Services and Learning Support teams as well as my academic peers."

"Inform other people/stakeholders of its value."

"Learn from the research and apply the learning to other areas of community cohesion."

"Use the resources as 'good practice' models."

"Enforce own experiences, practice, disseminate to colleagues and follow up contacts."

"I shall contact persons who work in student support with a view to collaboration."

"I am going to pursue being a student, leave my job next year and start my education path to a better life."

"Read through the information I have been presented with to see how it may be usefully incorporated (e.g. website links) examples of good practice."

"As I am working at college I will provide this information/TIPS to my student and college itself."

"It will enhance my role at Bolton College as retention and mentor officer."

"Continue to support students with even more resources and a greater awareness of how the university services – join up."

"Numerous ways; too many to detail."

"To take the model forward and embed good practice within department faculties in MMU."

"Dissemination/sharing with colleagues in the STAR project. Universities of Ulster, Sunderland, Manchester, Brighton, and Liverpool Hope."

"We are working with HEI's Colleges across England Wales NI (To identify and disseminate good practice managing periods of transition for enhancing learner experience) so lots of people to share your good work with."

"To continue the good work at MMU."

"Disseminate to appropriate staff and access students at college. Further attempt to progress Headstart."

"To disseminate throughout the university for best practice purposes in widening participation agenda."

"I will do verbal report at Info skills steering group next week and ask for a report about the event and TIPS to be included on the agenda of next senior management team meeting – so that it can be properly discussed. Also am going to contact LSU about the possibility of team teaching with staff on PG and Dissertation skills – very exciting."

"To support and improve my teaching practices."

"Most certainly I will as a WP person at HE."

"Integration into future work processes."

"Take it back to the institution I work in and disseminate information to my team and wider members of the university, and especially Student Services department. To show an example of good practice and 'smart' joined up collaborative working."

"I am a student retention officer and carry out institutional research on a yearly basis into withdrawal reasons. Then consult with members of staff where there are problems. They will assist me in providing examples of good practice in this process."

"Being made aware of the Headstart project could strengthen the study skills support provided for the beneficiaries."

"To assist the organisation in developing strategies to meet the needs of our beneficiaries. Gained information that can be communicated to community groups."

"To develop services based on the evidence gained through the TIPS programme, a means of putting forward a case for additional resources."

"To feedback to my team and the students to see how we can improve our services with relation to what and how the TIPS team have managed to do so."

"We will use the knowledge gained today to improve and better our services at BCC."

"Return to work, with ideas concerning communication."

"Look at publications and ways in which services interact with students before they enter university."

"Disseminate to colleagues – use to inform developments in HE support in FE colleges."

"To keep as a reference point in our office. To incorporate into the policy we are writing for Manchester Care Learners to be encouraged to go to university and how to support them when they are there."

"Maybe have a look at stats and handout to use to refer to."

"Disseminate to colleagues and practitioners within Schools, FE and HEI's."

"To increase the link on our internet site to areas related to TIPS."

"To give info to students on open days and interview days, as well as to my personal tutees."

"The information that we have gained will be disseminated within our Widening Participation unit."

"To support students I will disseminate you to my FE colleagues and look to address the students needs and wants."

"Try and bring together different areas of university support."

"Take back to the institution; feed in aspects of good practice."

"There are a lot of parallels between TIPS and my work, though my work is on a much smaller scale so lots of good ideas and practice to pickup."

"Go back to Newcastle SAC to try to improve advise to students in various ways i.e. Hardship fund workshops."

"Will feedback to student services and recruitment to learn from what you have done."

"Provided the impetus to implement ideas that I have had for a while as it has added credence to them. The project was very inspiring."

"I will use the information in personal tutor meetings for the development of the mature students, dissemination within Aim higher Humber partnership."

"I have gained a wider understanding of the services available and potential students needs to enable to direct students towards appropriate support. Made me aware that timing of our undergraduate dissertation does not fit in the timing of dissertation writing resources."

"To make my students aware that there is appropriate help and advice once they are at University. The information can also be used to help study skills and advice in FE colleges."

"Ensure that the good practice I have/we have identified is reinforced."

"More confidence to act. More informed ideas can be transferred to students studying at Salford."

"I will ensure our students are aware of the services available to them. I know who to contact if I have specific enquiries for support and advice."

"Contact with some of the presenters to incorporate study skills material into own department's activities, Some of the themes I will carry through in my own practice."

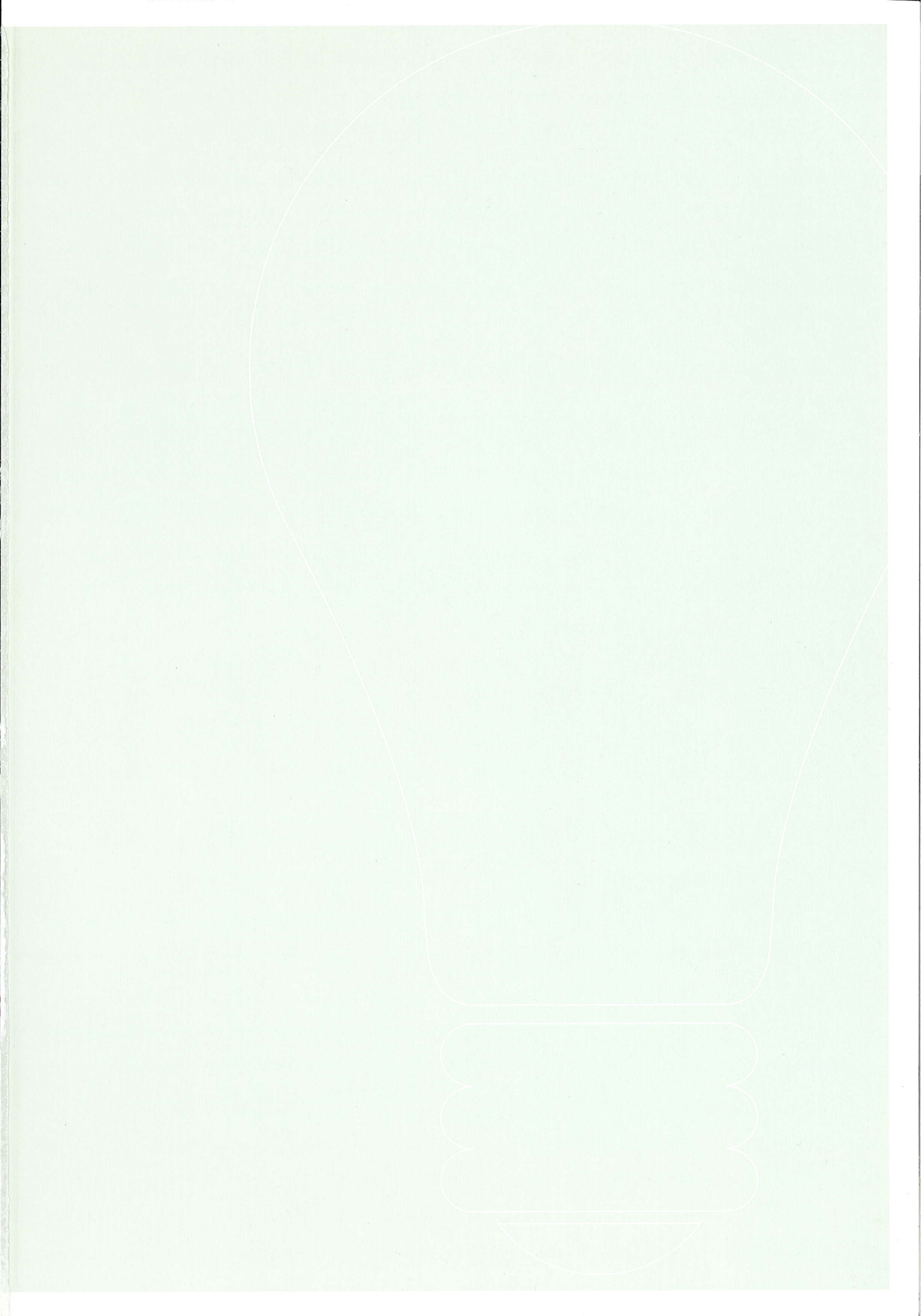
"Research general awareness improvement in confronting future problems."

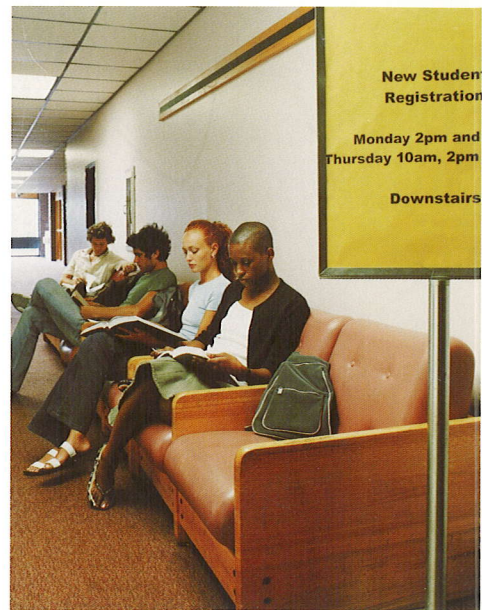
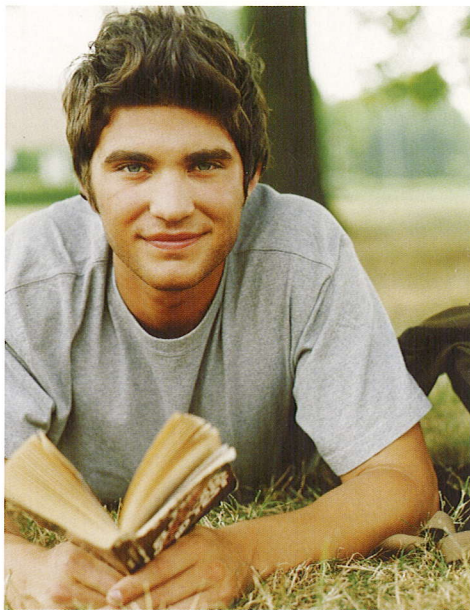


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TIPS

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